



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
July 3 – 10, 2014

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Summer reads from Inhabit Media

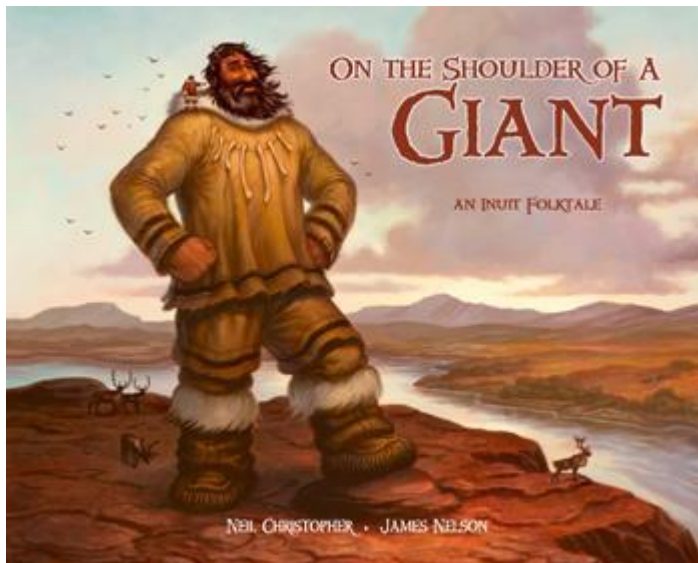
Children's tales of giants, wildlife and the goddess of the sea

SARAH ROGERS, July 02, 2015 - 11:27 am

Nunavut's first and only publishing house continues to produce c

..olourful and modern versions of Inuit storytelling, packaged with its trademark whimsical illustrations.

Have a look at some of Inhabit's latest offerings targeted for young readers between four and eight years of age.



Children's stories have often told the larger-than-life tales of giants, like Goliath and Paul Bunyan.

But what about the *inukpasugjuk*, or great giants, who roam the High Arctic?

In the new children's book, *On the Shoulder of a Giant*, Inhabit Media's Neil Christopher re-tells the story of Inukpak, a hulking giant who can walk from one end of the Arctic to the other in a few days.

Once he reaches the coast, Inukpak wades knee-deep into the sea to catch a bowhead whale, which he mistakes for a sculpin.

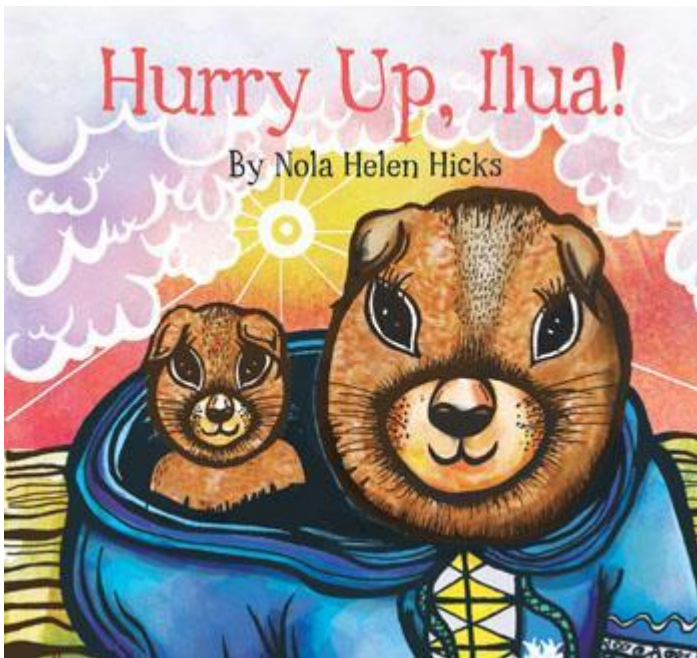
During his travels, Inukpak meets an Inuk hunter, who he mistakenly believes is an orphaned child.

While the hunter is first unsure of Inukpak, the two grow to become friends and fellow hunters.

On the Shoulders of a Giant

Re-told by Neil Christopher and illustrated by Jim Nelson

\$16.95
Hardcover



Hurry Up, Ilua! is a great story for children as young as three.

Ilua is a young siksik enjoying the bountiful autumn tundra with her family as they prepare for the approaching winter months and the “Long Sleep.”

When her mother asks her to watch her little sister Ivavaa so she can prepare their den for hibernation, Ilua happily agrees to take her sister to the sea shore.

But when winter snows come fast and furious, little Ilua must find a way to get home to the family’s warm den.

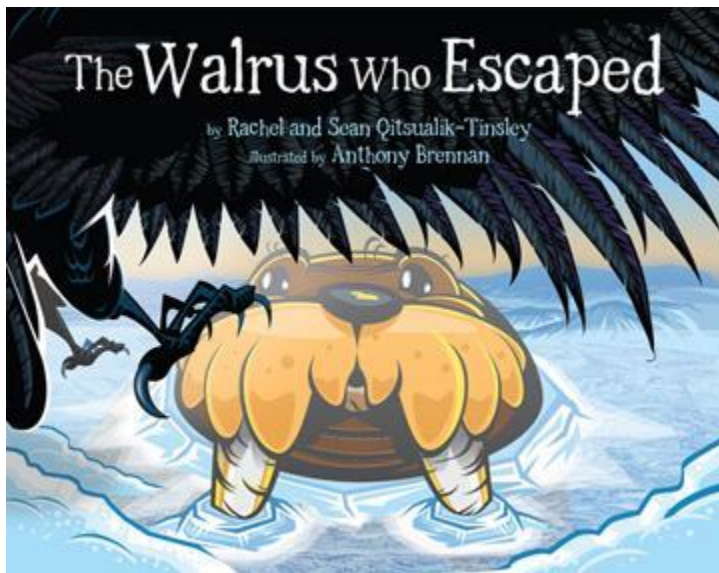
Hurry Up, Ilua! was written and colourfully-illustrated by Chesterfield Inlet teacher and writer, Nola Hicks.

Hurry Up, Ilua!

Story and illustrations by Nola Hicks

\$10.95

Paperback



In the tale of *The Walrus Who Escaped*, Walrus, with his beautiful spiralled tusks, is happily diving for clams along the Arctic shore.

But that enrages Raven, who can't get to the sea bed to harvest the tastiest clams.

Jealousy pushes Raven to cast a spell on Walrus, freezing the clam-hunter in the sea ice, where his large body is trapped.

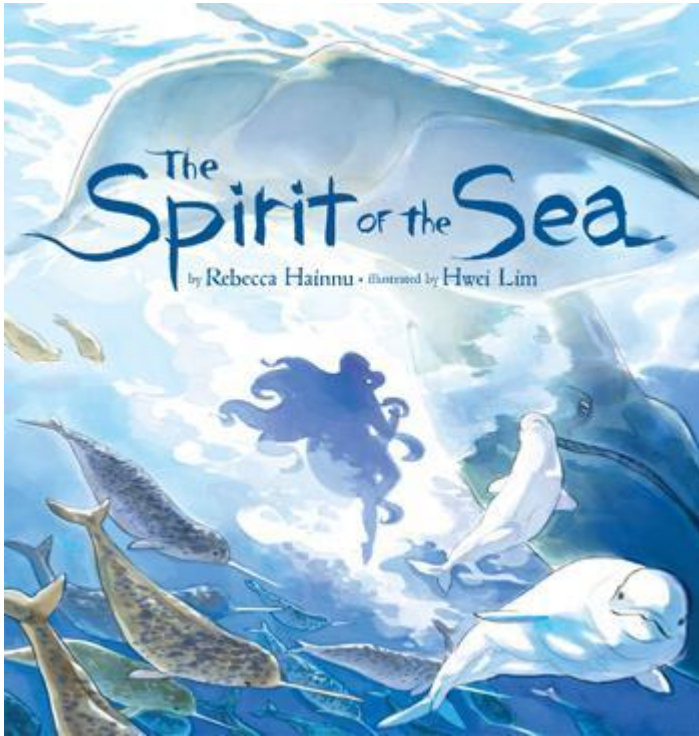
Walrus uses his physical strength to free himself from the ice, driving Raven away, but forever changing the form of a walrus.

The Walrus Who Escaped

Written by Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley and illustrated by Anthony Brennan

\$16.95

Hardcover



The Spirit of the Sea is one writer's take on the traditional legend of Sedna, Nuliajuq or Takannaaluk, the goddess of the sea.

In this version, Rachel Hainnu of Clyde River tells the story of Arnaq, a young woman who refuses to marry.

When she is deceived by a bird and later, her own father, Arnaq finds herself sinking to the bottom of the sea.

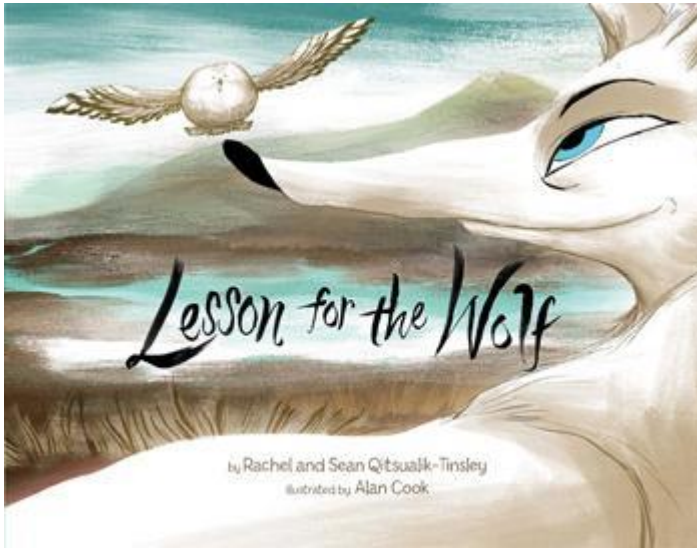
But she is rescued by the sea life around her and stays to call the ocean home, commanding the ocean and its sea life forever more.

The Spirit of the Sea

Written by Rebecca Hainnu and illustrated by Hwei Lim

\$16.95

Hardcover



In *Lesson for the Wolf*, a lone wolf distances himself from his pack and takes solace in the beauty of the land and its animals.

The wolf wishes so much to become what he is not that he grows to take the form of other animals on the tundra: the caribou, the wolverine and the owl.

But he finds himself unable to survive on the land in his new form, and returns to his family to discover who he really is.

Lesson for the Wolf

Written by Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley and illustrated by Alan Cook

\$16.95

Hardcover

Inhabit Media publishes English, Inuktitut and French-language editions of its books.

You can order books directly from [the publishing company](#) and most online booksellers. Copies are also sold at Arctic Ventures in Iqaluit and in gift shops in other communities.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674summer_reads_from_inhabit_media/

Musician credits his success to the First Nations people he met in prison

Musician credits success to First Nations people

Sheila North Wilson, CTV Winnipeg

Published Thursday, July 2, 2015 4:47PM CST

Last Updated Thursday, July 2, 2015 5:58PM CST

Enjoying a successful music career that spans more than 30 years, Juno Award winner, Steve Bell, credits much of his success to First Nations people he met in prison.

"I'll never forget you know, such kind people, such lovely people. Many of them were First Nations men," said Bell.

He wasn't an inmate, he was a little boy when was taught to play guitar in jails and now he says he feels the need to give back to Indigenous people including those at Shoal Lake 40, Ontario.



Steve Bell was taught to play guitar in jails and now he says he feels the need to give back to Indigenous people including those at Shoal Lake 40, Ontario.

Men in prisons like Stony Mountain, where his father was a chaplain.

Bell says at the time, he couldn't understand why there were so many Indigenous men in jails, so he asked his dad.

"He kind of said, 'why would you ask that question?' I said because there's more sort of in jail then out in the street. I made the connection although I wouldn't have the percentage language and all that kind of stuff. [My father] looked at me and smiled and said, 'that's a good question. It's those kinds of questions you need to ask for the rest of your life'," said Bell.

Bell says he has and questions injustices he sees against First Nations people.

Bell has launched a petition in [support of Shoal Lake 40](#).

Last week people there were left heartbroken, realizing there was no commitment by the federal government to build an all-weather road - a road to and from a community that sits next to Winnipeg's fresh water supply.

"It staggered me. This isn't a community a thousand miles north of the last road, this is a 15 minute drive off the TransCanada Highway. And that we're 100 years into the story and there's not a basic road is kind of mind boggling," concluded Bell.

His petition has reached thousands of people across the country and hopes at least 50 thousand people will sign it, asking supporters to pressure the federal government to honour its commitments by fulfilling a Treaty promise to build 'Freedom Road' for Shoal Lake 40.

In the meantime, the artist and the Chief of Shoal Lake 40 plan to meet and talk further about what else could be done to make sure Freedom Road becomes a reality.

In just two days, more than 2,300 people have signed the [petition](#). Bell hopes that number significantly increases before it is sent to the prime minister's office.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/musician-credits-his-success-to-the-first-nations-people-he-met-in-prison-1.2451377>

5 indigenous artists that will rock your summer road trip

Unreserved host Rosanna Deerchild recommends songs that will rock your playlist

By Rosanna Deerchild, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 04, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 04, 2015 6:00 AM ET



Iconic Canadian singer, songwriter and artist Buffy Sainte-Marie is a must on Rosanna Deerchild's summer playlist. (Paquin Entertainment)

No summer has begun until you head out for that first road trip: friends crowded in, double-doubles all around, favourite tunes blasting and a badly refolded map on the passenger seat. It's go time!

I don't know how it goes in your car, but in mine, the trick to a good trip is a good playlist. It must be the perfect mix of sing-along songs, ballads down memory lane and full-on rock-outs you can speed along highways to (but not too fast because, you know ... safety first).

No one knows better about travelling than indigenous people. We've been walking, driving, marching and dancing across this country since forever (give or take) so no one knows good travelling songs like we do.

Here is the *Unreserved* top five playlist:

5. *Walk Alone* — LightningCloud

OK, yes, you're driving buuuut this song will make you keep in mind that home is where the heart is, no matter where you are.

4. *Devil Come Down Sunday* — Derek Miller

This is the song you will want to turn up loud while streaking down the highway past the cross road at sunset. Just don't look in the rear view mirror.

3. *It's My Way* — Buffy Sainte-Marie

You can't go wrong with Buffy. Whether vintage or anthem, every song lists needs a Sainte-Marie song.

From her new album *Power in the Blood*, *It's My Way* is the song you'll sing while homeward bound or bound for new journeys.

2. *Pow Wow Wow* — Cris Derksen

The prairie sky is endless, moody and has its very own dance that lasts from sunrise to the star shine. If the prairie song were a song, it might sound just like this one.

Very cool video - just don't watch while you are driving!

1. *Suplex* — A Tribe Called Red

DON'T EVEN leave your house without a whole lot of these guys on your playlist. Any album, any song, you must MUST have A Tribe Called Red.

Like their previous powwow techno groove mixes, *Suplex* will have you wanting to park it and dance in the middle of nowhere.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/5-indigenous-artists-that-will-rock-your-summer-road-trip-1.3136165>

Art, identity and freedom

Exhibition within First Nations show celebrates corn husk



Elizabeth Doxtater, *Washing Corn*, acrylic on canvas. From her exhibition, *The Art of Peace*, at Woodland Cultural Centre.

Hamilton Spectator

By [Regina Haggo](#), Jul 04, 2015

The Mona Lisa is in residence at the Woodland Cultural Centre. It's not Leonardo's original, but a wonderful imposition by Elizabeth Doxtater, a First Nations artist.

Doxtater's exhibition, The Art of Peace, is an exhibition within a bigger one called First Nations Art 2015. The bigger exhibition brings together more than 30 artists of First Nations ancestry including Lee Claremont, Kelly Greene, Lydia Isaacs, Shelley Niro and Mark Seabrook.

This year's show marks the 40th anniversary, making this one of the longest-running annual exhibitions of its kind.

Doxtater's exhibition celebrates the corn husk, an ancient art material. She's made small corn husk figures and also incorporated corn husks into her acrylic paintings.

Doxtater calls her figures "dolls." All are faceless and clothed. Some recreate historical events, such as the ratification of the Great Law of Peace. Others explain traditions. A figure looking into water, for instance, explains how the dolls became faceless.

"The doll forgot about her duties and spent long hours by the creeks and streams admiring her own reflection," Doxtater tells me. "Her face was removed. She now reminds the people to remain humble and not to become obsessed with appearance, as true beauty is found in fulfilling your commitments."

The corn husk reappears in "Washing Corn." A faceless woman at work takes over the whole painting, her bent-over body echoing the forms of the distant hills. Doxtater works in a linear style, using dark lines to enclose parts of the body and clothes.

A set of three paintings recalls Leonardo's portraits from the 15th century. Like the corn husk figures, the Mona Lisa, Woman in a Red Dress and Lady with an Ermine are all faceless. And instead of stroking an ermine, Doxtater's sitter holds an ear of corn.

Doxtater calls her trio "The Three Sisters of Leonardo," an homage to "the Haudenosaunee sustenance known as three sisters: corn, beans and squash."

The triptych works on four levels.

First, doll making was traditionally categorized as craft, while painting was art. Doxtater connects the two by imposing the corn husk doll onto some of the most famous examples of western art.

Second, Doxtater brings together First Nations art and European art, giving them equal weight.

"I realized that many of our contributions to the art world are often seen as craft," Doxtater says. "I realized that if they are going to ever be accepted as fine art, then we have to present them to the world at that level."

Third, Doxtater practises what she calls "reverse colonialism."

Canada's First Nations have for centuries been victims of European colonialism, which included the now infamous residential schools and other instruments of cultural genocide.

"Europeans claimed whatever was ours as their own," Doxtater says. Claiming Leonardo's art for her culture is a way of reversing the process and healing some of the injury.

And finally, Doxtater seeks freedom as an artist and a person.

"We have, for so long, been working so very hard to validate all that we and our parents and grandparents have protected from the acts of cultural genocide. Now that the general population starts to hopefully understand what steps were taken to form their country, maybe we can relax a bit.

"Even as we strive to protect our identity and our sovereignty, we can still appreciate beauty in things we see from the outside world. I think that's ultimate freedom, when oppression no longer inhibits what we either do or don't do."

Regina Hagg, art historian, public speaker, curator and former professor at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, teaches at the Dundas Valley School of Art.

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/whatson-story/5706781-art-identity-and-freedom/>

Five questions with Durham filmmaker Serena Morcinek

Waawaase'aagaming featured at Water Docs Festival 2015



DURHAM -- Filmmaker Serena Morcinek with a bald eagle at the Cannington Dog Sled Races and Winter Festival in January, 2015.

Uxbridge Times Journal, Jul 04, 2015

Serena Morcinek, 20, lives near Pefferlaw in Brock Township. She went to school in Uxbridge and is well-known there, winning prizes for her paintings and photography at the Uxbridge Fall Fair and for her entries in the Youth Short Film Festival at The Roxy Theatres.

With Becky Big Canoe, a writer, artist and activist who was born and raised as a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island in Lake Simcoe, Morcinek made *Waawaase'aagaming*, a documentary short film about Lake Simcoe from a First Nations' perspective. Its premiere was at Water Docs Festival 2015, a documentary film festival about water, in Toronto earlier this year.

After a stint living in Toronto, Morcinek recently moved back to north Durham and is "working on a lot of different projects" this summer, including her own "short sci-fi-esque/fantasy film about mental health and a handful of other short film projects and animations."

1. *Why did you choose to make a film about Lake Simcoe?* The idea of making the film was Becky Big Canoe's. I was working with Becky on a talk she was doing about the importance of the water and the idea about a proper film grew from there I think. Becky wanted to create a film that would share stories and thoughts of her community and people around the lake, and in turn help bring awareness of the condition of the water. So that's what we did. I loved the idea, so we decided to collaborate and the ideas just kept on growing. Lake Simcoe is a part of everyone's lives in the area whether they realize it or not and the project was something I really wanted to be a part of in order to help share its stories.

2. *It's viewed by most as a recreation spot, but of course First Nations see it differently -- how do they view the lake?* Well, this question is a bit hard for me to answer. I'm not really the one to ask this, but from what I've learned and seen myself while making the film, the lake is a true life force. It holds legends, stories and history and it is a true part of everyone's lives. Without it, so much is lost -- and not just the wildlife and health of the area. To have so much history with the lake pollution-free only to have it being quickly taken away is awful. It's not something everyone tends to think about.

3. *What was it like working with Becky Big Canoe?* It was awesome working with Becky. I definitely learned a lot of things from her while working on the film. She has so much to share and I'm so happy I was able to help bring her ideas to life.

4. *What are the main threats to the health of Lake Simcoe?* I think one of the biggest threats to the health of the lake is the lack of awareness. Yes, pollution itself is causing the trouble, but if people actually understood how much their actions harm the lake I think there would be a lot less of it. The stuff happening to our lake is an accumulation of thousands of people who don't see the link between the cause and effect. Once people actually see the problems going on I hope good things will start to happen and the lake will start to be respected and cared for once again. It's being taken for granted.

5. *Tell us about the experience of having your film in Water Docs Festival 2015.*

Having the film in the Water Docs Festival was both exciting and rewarding. We worked very hard on the film, and to be able to share it with people eager to learn about all things water was fantastic. There were a few other short films screened that day which were a joy to watch, and having our film alongside them was amazing.

Direct Link: <http://www.durhamregion.com/whatson-story/5708167-five-questions-with-durham-filmmaker-serena-morcinek/>

Mural tells Sault stories

By [Brian Kelly](#), Sault Star

Saturday, July 4, 2015 10:02:21 EDT AM



Rihkee Strapp and Candace Day Neveau are lead artists for the Mill Market mural project.

Rihkee Strapp wants to put Sault Ste. Marie's hidden histories in a new art project for all to see.

The lead visual artist for Mill Market's mural project is appealing to groups with stories that haven't received much fanfare in the past to participate.

The venture, with \$10,000 in support from Ontario Art Council's Aboriginal Artists in Community Program, is about “telling the stories of the community, specifically ones that aren't being told,” Strapp told The Sault Star. “Community members get to see themselves represented in the different panels.”

The mural, size to be determined, will go up on an outside wall at Mill Market on Canal Drive. Art made with acrylic paint will be posted on medium density overlay panels

roughly ranging in size from 50 centimetres by 50 centimetres to one metre by two metres.

When Mill Market eventually makes the move to Mill Square, the former St. Marys Paper site, most of the panels will be transferred. Community groups will be sought to house the others.

Strapp, a graduate of Algoma University, will create the mural with help from three painting assistants. Panels will go up in August and September.

The Metis artist attended a mural making course offered by Scarborough-based Mural Routes last summer.

Candace Day Neveau, storytelling lead, will organize events to launch panels in the summer and fall. The member of Serpent River First Nation heads ThunderBird Rock, a company that offers ecological and cultural tours in the area of Whitefish Island.

A graphic designer, photographer and musicians are also being sought for the mural project. Strapp expects to have talent in place by mid-month.

Applicants from across Algoma District are welcomed, with “a particular focus on First Nations and Metis people” because of the OAC program funding. All ages can apply, but Strapp is focusing on youth because that demographic represents “a particularly hard time to enter the arts and culture sector.” She is seeking a participant with experience who can mentor younger artists.

Artists will be paid based on suggested fees by Canadian Artists' Representation.

More funding support is being sought to cover expenses for artist fees, food, transportation and child care.

“We want to make sure that we're accessible as possible and that we're paying all the artists a fair amount of money,” said Strapp.

She wants to attend other community events to speak with participants about the mural project.

Potential sponsors can contact Strapp at rstrapp@marsdd.com

Artists interested in participating in the mural project, or have an idea for artwork, can go to www.millmarket.weebly.com

Direct Link: <http://www.saultstar.com/2015/07/04/mural-tells-sault-stories>

Métis in the Mountains Asikawak Festival

By [Jocelyn Doll](#), Pincher Creek Echo

Sunday, July 5, 2015 2:11:57 MDT PM



Stand feet shoulder width apart, dominant foot forward. Rest the tomahawk on your shoulder with your elbow out. Take a step forward with your left foot and in one smooth motion release the tomahawk.

Tomahawk throwing was one of the many cultural activities at the Métis in the Mountains Asihawak Festival that took place at the Castle River Rodeo grounds on June 25 - 28.

According to Roxanne Debroux, one of the festival organisers, the goal of the weekend-long celebration is for people to understand what it is to be Métis.

“A lot of people don’t understand who we are,” Debroux said. “They just think we’ve got Indian in us, that’s it. They don’t realise that the Metis are a different, unique culture.”

Festival-goers nocked arrows with the odd coloured fletching facing up. Holding the bow straight out in front and drawing back to their chins. They looked through the sights at the balloons blowing in the wind and released.

Others, tried the slingshot. Keeping their wrists strong. Gripping the paintball as if pinching someone, aiming the best they could and releasing.

Those who weren't interested in trying out the more physical activities, ventured inside and carefully sewed beads into flowers, joined in the music making, or smothered honey on homemade bannock.

Dinner and entertainment followed in the evening.

Edmonton Métis Dancers

The Edmonton Métis Dancers performed at the festival on Friday evening. Lyle Donald, the director of dance of the troupe said that Metis dance is a combination of the traditional dances from the combined heritages that make up the Métis community, Scottish, French and First Nations.

"The French side was where the step dancing came from, the heavy duty step dancing," Donald explained.

The troupe was started in 1985 by Georgina Donald, and currently consists of three generations of Donald family dancers.

Rupertsland Institute

It wasn't all fun and games at the festival, Debroux made sure there was support for people who were looking for it. If attendees were interested in finding a job, applying for postsecondary funding, and taking a break from the heat, the Rupertsland Institute had one of their buses at the festival.

The organization provides post-secondary education funding opportunities for off-settlement Métis. But everyone is welcome on the bus. There were opportunities to write resumes as well as assistance getting started in the work force.

Usually a counsellor is on board, but many are busy this time of year with the fresh high school graduates, so driver Bryan Hebden, ran the show.

Hebden normally covers the northern routes, but his counterpart is away on holidays so he got to come down south for the weekend.

"It's an enjoyable job," he said. "We can go a day without talking to anybody and an elder will come on board and talk for two or three hours."

Around 250 people attended the festival this year, some staying for a few hours, some for the whole weekend.

This is the second year the festival has been at the rodeo grounds. It was held in partnership with the Great Canadian Barn Dance before that.

Although happy with the turnout Debroux hopes to see the festival grow.

"I'm imagining people looking forward to this every year and wanting to come," she said.

Direct Link: <http://www.pinchercreekecho.com/2015/07/05/metis-in-the-mountains-asikawak-festival>

Reality TV discovering Iqaluit, en français

Radio-Canada's *La Petite Séduction*, shot in Iqaluit, airs July 29

DAVID MURPHY, July 06, 2015 - 8:30 am



Jean-Louis Cormier meets Iqaluit Mayor Mary Wilman at the Legislative Assembly June 26. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)



Dany Turcotte, host of *La Petite Seduction*, unveils Jean-Louis Cormier to a crowd of about 50 people at the Legislative Assembly in Iqaluit June 26. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)



Kids wait in anticipation of meeting Louis-Jean Cormier at the Nunavut Legislative Assembly in Iqaluit June 26. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)

Reality television's love affair with Canada's northernmost capital is continuing for a third straight year.

The Canadian version of *The Amazing Race* filmed here in [in 2013](#), and the British show *A Cabbie Abroad* shot an episode in Nunavut's capital [in 2014](#).

This year, Quebec invaded in the form of Radio-Canada's *La Petite Séduction*.

"It's basically a really big advertisement for the community," Carrefour Nunavut's François Fortin said.

The show is a spinoff of the 2003 French film *La grande séduction*.

"The idea is that a little village or city gathers together to entice a special guest and try to convince [them] to stay," Fortin said of the film..

"In the TV show, they try to entice the show's guest," Fortin said.

Now in its 10th season, *La petite séduction* averages more than one million viewers per week and has featured 180 villages, according to Radio-Canada.

The guest celebrity for the Iqaluit episode is popular singer-songwriter Louis-Jean Cormier — soloist and lead singer of the indie-rock band Karkwa, and also a judge on Quebec's version of the reality TV singing competition, the Voice, called *La Voix*.

As Cormier sits June 28 at Iqaluit's Francophone Centre, he looks like a celebrity with his scruffy jet-black hair, thick black scarf and black padded jacket.

"I pick up this city in the list that they gave to me. I said, if I do this kind of show, I would love to be — *comment tu dis en Anglais* — shaken a little," Cormier told *Nunatsiaq News*.

Cormier admits he was shaken, at least by the weather.

It's been quite a change in scenery for Cormier — he went from Parisian heat to Arctic snowfall in a matter of days.

Cormier was in Paris until Monday, flew back to Quebec City to play at the Plains of Abraham for the Fête nationale du Québec, on Wednesday, June 24, and arrived in the Arctic on Friday, June 26.

"Friday? Yeah, I think so. I don't even know what day we are. It's been that busy."

Taking 10 minutes to rest on a couch, Cormier's "happy to be here in Iqaluit," he said while showing off his correct pronunciation of Iqaluit.

But Cormier didn't get much of a chance to relax while here.

The first of five main filming events included welcoming parties at the airport and legislative assembly, and a tour of Iqaluit by taxi.

The next day featured Inuit games with Johnny Issaluk at Sylvia Grinnell territorial park where Cormier and the well-known Québécois host of the show, Dany Turcotte, did some face-pulling.

That's where you stand beside someone and you both reach around to the far side of the other person's face and then hook your finger into the other person's mouth, pulling on it like a fish hook. Whoever relents first loses.

Dog-sledding, throat singing, traditional foods and a history of francophones in the Arctic, including captain [Joseph-Elzear Bernier](#), followed.

Bernier, who was sent on Canadian expeditions to the Arctic, completed about 12 trips in a span of 20 years in the early 1900s. Inuit called him Kapitaikallak — or "the stocky captain."

"He played a lot of French songs to a lot of Inuit he met," Fortin said. "We almost had his great, great granddaughter come down to speak but in the end she couldn't."

"But there's people still today who sing songs they learn from that time. And they think it's Inuit songs," he said. "But when they sing it, it's traditional French songs. So it's awesome. So we got someone to sing one of those songs."

Cormier didn't know much about Nunavut or Inuit culture before coming here — just what artists like Nunavik's, now Montreal-based, singer-songwriter Elisapie Isaac told him.

"We crossed Canada many times touring between all the francophone communities. But Iqaluit is very different," Cormier said.

Cormier compares Iqaluit to both Reykjavik, Iceland, and his hometown of Sept-Îles, Quebec.

"When we were touring with Karkwa, we went to Reykjavik to tour there at a music festival. And it was like walking on the moon," he said.

In a parallel world, Cormier can see himself living the northern life.

"Because I'm from Sept-Îles, I have a lot of friends who live there with big pick-ups, four wheelers, skidoos and other things," he says.

"So I would be that kind of guy if I wouldn't be a musician. But I have to live in a city like Montreal just to live my music life."

Cormier said two things will stick out from this trip, both music-related.

"I saw an old Inuk man who sang with a large and thin drum. So I will remember that for sure. And the other is two young ladies who sang with the throat," he said.

"I know [throat-singing] exists. But to see it here in all this *panorama*, it was like — oh my God. It's the real thing."

Iqaluit's Marie Belleau, a lawyer, fluent in French, English and Inuktitut, was one of those throat singers who performed for Cormier.

Belleau mostly got to know the host Dany Turcotte. Mentioning his name makes her giggle.

"He was cracking jokes all the time. He is a funny guy," Belleau said.

Belleau was often pulled aside by the film crew to help Turcotte pronounce Inuktitut words.

"I was helping him say Iqalummiut, Auyuittuq Park. He was pretty good. He had to [spell] it out phonetically and stuff but I find if you speak French it might be easier to pronounce Inuktitut."

"The 'R' — *rrr* — is the same in Inuktitut and in French. And he already knew the *rrr*," Belleau said, rolling an 'R'.

In the end, Cormier is hoping the show prompts Quebecers to look north, and see something new.

"It helps the village shine. Sometimes, most of the time, it's villages who don't have any chance to shine otherwise. So it's funny to see Dany Turcotte visiting some villages," Cormier said.

"I think this show that we made in Iqaluit is a very good way to learn about the place. It's very different and very far from what we're used to see."

Cormier said he might come back, next time for music.

Until then, Carrefour's Fortin said everyone is invited to a viewing party at the Francophone centre when the show airs, July 29.



Louis-Jean Cormier and Dany Turcotte take part in a traditional Inuit face-pulling contest. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674reality_tv_discovering_igaluit_en_francais/

Ottawa Inuit mark Nunavut Day with cultural celebrations

Tungasuvvingat Inuit offers throat singing, drum dancing workshops and a chance to reconnect

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 09, 2015 2:58 AM CT Last Updated: Jul 09, 2015 6:30 AM CT



Three boys in Arviat hold a Nunavut flag on a trampoline. Today marks Nunavut Day, the 22nd anniversary of Parliament passing the Nunavut Act and Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act. (submitted by Madeline Issakiark)

As communities across Canada's newest territory celebrate Nunavut Day, Inuit in Ottawa will use the event as a way to reconnect with their culture and each other.

"It has a positive effect on the whole community — not just the Inuit community — but the whole community of Ottawa," said Christine Lund, a coordinator with Tungasuvvingat Inuit.

The Ottawa community and resource centre is holding a small event today for 50 to 75 people, and a much larger event on Saturday.

"These celebrations offer opportunities to come together, to speak Inuktitut, to enjoy your neighbours that may be further away than when living in the North in the smaller communities."

3,000 Inuit in Ottawa

Lund says Tungasuvvingat Inuit estimates 3,000 Inuit live in the Ottawa area and this is an opportunity for people who don't usually see each other to reconnect.



A young Inuk celebrates Nunavut Day in Ottawa in 2014. Tungasuvvingat Inuit put together an annual celebration to bring together Inuit from across the Ottawa region. (Submitted by Tungasuvvingat Inuit)

The Saturday event will begin with the lighting of the Qulliq, a stone lamp traditionally filled with seal oil, at 9:30 a.m. at 297 Savard Ave. in the Ottawa community of Vanier.

After that, a bus will take residents to Wesley Clover Park, where there will be drum dancing and throat singing workshops, games, and a chance for Inuit to share stories about the territory.

"It's important that we have opportunities to celebrate together and remember our heritage and our roots. And have pride in who we are."

Lund says anyone who is interested in learning more about the culture should attend.

In previous years, between 250 and 500 people have attended the event.

Lund said it's about "really enjoying the fact that we're here and we're Inuit and we're proud."

July 9, 2015, marks the 22nd anniversary of Parliament passing the Nunavut Act and Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act. Nunavut officially separated from the Northwest Territories on April 1, 1999.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/ottawa-inuit-mark-nunavut-day-with-cultural-celebrations-1.3143334>

Fine fiddling, country music perk up a summer drive

By Bill Robertson, For The Star Phoenix July 9, 2015

Molanosa, Waiting, Metis Music Vol. 2 (out of 5) each

Now that summer's here and Back to Batoche days are approaching, I'm thinking it's time to nose the car northeast of town and do a little moseying around the country. Whether I head out of town towards Wakaw and carve in, or take Highway 11 and drop in on Duck

Lake, I know what I'll be listening to: three new CDs from Turtle Island Music here in Saskatoon. The first one I'll pop in the player is Molanosa, named for a Métis settlement up north, and played by Harry "Tools" Halkett, with help from Jay Ross and Randy Halkett. Harry is equally adept on the guitar and the fiddle and the songs here jump back and forth between the two instruments, starting with the gentle turn around the dance floor of Molanosa Swing. After that, there's the fiddle rouser of Flop Eared Mule, the nimble guitar picking of Harry's Medley, the slick guitar work of Lone Star Rag, and some slide guitar on the old classic Wild Wood Flower.

On Boil 'Em Cabbage, Harry really makes things boil with that fiddle and goes for another fiddle gem on Maple Sugar. Steel Guitar Rag is a lot of fun and the fiddle romper Golden Slippers closes the show. Wow, I'm barely out of town.

Next into the mixmaster is Phil Boyer's Waiting, on which Phil, a longtime country singer, treats us to some original songs and some classics. He opens with the upbeat Waiting, in which he's waiting for the perfect song to ask a gal to dance. There's some gentle strumming and a little steel on When I Opened Up the Show, about Phil being a country music singer, and there's a great bit of fun with the grandkids on Dance, Dance, in which Phil incorporates some of Lord of the Dance.

He goes for a couple of country chestnuts on Carl Crane's God Has Taken an Angel Home and Frankie Ballard's weeper Don't Tell Mama, then turns to Kris Kristofferson for For the Good Times. Buck Owens gets a look in with Second Fiddle, but mostly it's Phil on the way out with Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, which works in some What a Friend We Have in Jesus, and the old waltz beat of Time Goes On, about time doing just that for a country barroom singer. You should be in the back roads mood by now.

Finally, I'd plug in Dallas Boyer's Métis Music Volume 2 to listen to Phil's son, both of whom have roots in Batoche that I'm on my way to right now. Dallas has some good long tracks here, so you can get right into some great fiddle tunes. Starting things off is the rousing Blue Mountain Hornpipe that really picks up the spirits and gives them a good shake. For a slow and sad round of the floor, look to the Tear Drop Waltz, but clear out of the way when Dallas turns it on for Big John McNeil, followed by the short and high stepping Duck Dance. Another quick one is the high register Liberty Two Step, then you can have a rest with the old time feel of Reginald's Waltz.

There's a Métis classic in Drops of Brandy, and more of that fun with St. Anne's Reel, the Red River Jig, and the lovely sweet melody of the Red Wing Medley. By now you're being directed where to park at Batoche and, with your ears and spirits all livened up, you're ready to get out there and jig. Happy dancing and happier listening with these three CDs warming you up.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/entertainment/Fine+fiddling+country+music+perk+summer+drive/11199468/story.html>

Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan features Cree Othello

Aboriginal version of tragedy features lines in Cree, aboriginal issues.

Reported by **Lasia Kretzel**

First Posted: Jul 9, 2015 6:21am

Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan (SOTS) presents Othello with a prairie twist.

The local theatre troop has returned for another season, and has partnered with the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company (SNTC) to create a unique Cree business version of Shakespeare's classic tragedy. The play is one of two, including a post Second World War version of Much Ado About Nothing.

"We knew we wanted to do Othello, which of course if we're going to do Othello around here we wanted to do a Cree version," director Will Brooks said.

The play, historically centered around a Moorish general in the Venetian army, follows Othello, a Cree businessman who has climbed the ranks of the corporate world, but faces racism, hatred and jealousy from some of his peers.

Tempers flare when Othello, played by the famous Cree stage and film actor Michael Lawrenchuk, marries the daughter of a Caucasian colleague and promotes a young man to a high-level position.

Lawrenchuk said the play has modern day ties to Canada's Aboriginal population.

"It looks at a Cree man that is trying to survive in a world which was not created by him and a world where things were taken away from him and which suffers from and then he does this horrific thing," he said.

Adapting the original text, Lawrenchuk has woven pieces of Canadian history, including residential schools, the mistreatment of First Nations peoples, and missing and murdered aboriginal women into the play.

"It's a very poignant statement about where we are today in terms of male violence against women and how we think that's okay. I say we think it's okay because it happens," Lawrenchuk said, adding theatre is a form of education. "Theatre tells a very human story about something that is very crucial to maintaining humanity."

Several monologues also feature Cree lines.

The production has also given many local First Nations actors and stage workers the chance to break into the industry and sharpen their skills. Working with SNTC, the theatre company has brought on several mentees to help put the show together.

Aaron Shingoose became involved in the project early on. An actor for five years and a stage manager for two, Shingoose said he was eager to work as a design mentee to become more than a "one trick pony," but he was also very interested in the Cree version of the play.

"When it comes to the tones of dealing with prejudice and stereotypes, Othello is definitely a great gateway drug for education people on that," he said, adding it's good to see aboriginal actors in a Shakespear play. "Now we need to take it a step further where we finally see an aboriginal person not having to be limited to an aboriginal person."

Shingoose said while theatre alone is a difficult field to break into, it is often harder for aboriginal workers due to numerous financial, stereotype, and physical barriers. Youth who grow up in isolated communities have additional barriers due to distance and lack of resources, meaning they may turn away from theatre at a younger age.

Fourth-year University of Saskatchewan drama student Logan Martin Arcand said he was fortunate to be in the right places at the right time. He said going to university showed him there was more to theatre than acting and directing, such as set design, lighting, and management.

Arcand said the SOTS Othello has helped break down some barriers.

"(Aboriginal people) only get casts in roles when there needs to be an aboriginal person on stage, and there's no reason why we can't do other Shakespeare plays or plays from before the 1950s without colour barrier," he said.

The play runs through August 23rd at the stage behind the former Mendel Art Gallery. Tickets and show times can be found on the SOTS [website](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.newstalk650.com/story/shakespeare-saskatchewan-features-cree-othello/566947>

Métis artist Christi Belcourt's work featured in Valentino fashions

Valentino designers inspired by Belcourt's Water Song painting for its 2016 Resort line

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 03, 2015 9:53 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 03, 2015 12:46 PM ET



Water Song, Christi Belcourt's acrylic on canvas, has been used as inspiration for a new fashion line by Italian designer Valentino. (Christi Belcourt)

Métis artist Christi Belcourt says she's seen top designers appropriating indigenous culture without permission, so she was pleasantly surprised when designers from the Rome-based House of Valentino contacted her a few months ago about her work.

Currently living and working in Espanola, west of Sudbury, Belcourt said she's not sure what provoked the designers to reach out to her. Belcourt's paintings channel the beadwork that Métis women are known for. Her canvasses incorporate plants and other motifs that hold meaning in her culture.



Christi Belcourt says Valentino is endorsed by Greenpeace, so she felt comfortable working with the designers.

Her work has a big online presence, and she has been active with *Walking with our Sisters*, an art installation telling the stories of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls that has travelled North America.

Belcourt said she is pleased with the effort the designers are making to ensure their reproductions are faithful to her original paintings.

"You know, it's really lovely to work with designers who respect the artist's work so highly," she said. "It's not very often that they do, and do so in such a respectful way, and I think it's ... it's refreshing," she said.



Italian designer Valentino has transferred images from one of Métis artist Christi Belcourt's paintings in the National Gallery of Canada onto clothing. (Valentino)

Painstaking effort was made to match colours and shapes exactly from one of her paintings hanging in the National Gallery, *Water Song*, she said. The work is then printed and embroidered onto outfits, which vary from shorts and halter tops to full length dresses.

Her other consideration before saying yes to the collaboration, was the environmental record of the House of Valentino.

The fashion industry, said Belcourt, is known for its poor environmental practices. She didn't want her art linked to that aspect of it.

She learned, however, that Valentino gets much of its fabric in Italy, and tops Greenpeace's list of environmental consciousness in their industry

"I think that this is really important, especially since the piece itself is called *Water Song*," she said. "And we know that the industry itself — in terms of clothing manufacturing and things like that — use a lot of water and pollute water."

Belcourt said she hopes future designers will follow the lead of those at Valentino, both in preserving the environment and cultural appreciation.

There are nine outfits in Valentino's 2016 Resort line that feature Belcourt's work.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/m%C3%A9tis-artist-christi-belcourt-s-work-featured-in-valentino-fashions-1.3136219>

First Nations Gala about rejuvenation

[Christine Hinzmann](#) / Prince George Citizen

July 5, 2015 09:15 PM



A hand painted drum by local artist Carla Joseph is only one of the items that will be for sale during a live and silent auction to take place on July 16th as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Carrier Sekani Family Services. Some other items include

hand woven cedar bark hats, and a limited edition print by artist Rande Cook. Citizen Photo by James Doyle July 2, 2015 - James Doyle, Photographer

Carrier Sekani Family Services celebrates its 25th anniversary on Thursday, July 16 with a First Nations Art Gala at the Coast Inn of the North.

The art gala, a partnership with the Two Rivers Gallery, is entitled Ying'henzit, which means rejuvenation.

"The celebration itself is about rejuvenation of the arts and making sure we preserve the traditions that have existed throughout this beautiful territory for centuries and making sure that young artists have a chance to continue with these traditions," said Olava Brooke, accreditation lead for the Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS). "We really want to preserve the culture of the north and bring the traditions back."

Proceeds from this fundraising event goes to a bursary for students pursuing indigenous arts.

All artwork for the gala has been created by First Nations artists from North Central and Northwest B.C.

"We have a variety of art that will be at the gala," said Brooke. "We have many examples of art such as moccasins, which are made the traditional way when the artists prepare the moose hide themselves, which is a very cumbersome process and so they have to soak it, stretch it, scrape it, tan it and preserve it and then they can turn it into different items like moccasins, gloves and vests."

There will be baskets created by cedar bark weaving as well as art pieces like jewelry, beadwork and dream catchers.

There is a silent and a live auction during the celebration.

"We have Melissa Barcellos from Initiatives Prince George as our auctioneer," said Brooke. "She used to do live art auctions on cruise ships so she is very experienced and I think it will be quite fun."

During the event there is a sit-down dinner.

"We wanted to do something a little more intimate and just something nice for our guests," said Brooke. Entertainment will be provided by traditional drummers.

Tickets are on sale at Prince George Community Arts Council's Studio 2880, 2820-15th Avenue. Tickets are \$100 each of \$900 for a table of 10.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/first-nations-gala-about-rejuvenation-1.1990266#sthash.DsH1UeH3.dpuf>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

\$97K in provincial dollars to Wahnapiitae First Nation

By: Sudbury Northern Life Staff

| Jul 06, 2015 - 12:00 PM |



The Wahnapiatae First Nation has received \$97,570 in provincial dollars to develop a plan that will determine if land in the community can support commercial and tourism activities. Supplied photo.

Band looking at commercial and tourism development

Ontario is supporting economic development opportunities for aboriginal communities with funding of more than \$1 million to support seven different projects in northeastern Ontario.

That includes \$97,570 to the nearby Wahnapiatae First Nation to develop a plan that will determine if land in the community can support commercial and tourism activities.

Through the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (AEDF), the province is helping to create jobs, support new skills training opportunities and improve economic outcomes for aboriginal people, a press release said.

The seven projects represent a range of opportunities aimed at encouraging economic diversification in northeastern Ontario, from providing training opportunities for aboriginal people in mining to supporting aboriginal communities as they develop economic plans and pursue commercial and industrial parks.

Here's a full list of recipients:

-Wahgoshig First Nation will receive \$247,341 this year to work with Primero Mining Corporation and Northern College to deliver a mining training program for members.

-Brunswick House First Nation is receiving \$100,000 this year to complete a feasibility study to support commercial development.

-Garden River First Nation received \$100,000 to plan for potential commercial development of land along the Highway 17 corridor on the bypass where the reserve is located.

-Thessalon First Nation is receiving \$200,000 over two years to hire staff to complete a feasibility study investigating an expansion of its bio centre.

-United Chiefs and Council of Mnidoo Mnising is receiving \$236,787 over three years to hire staff to implement a tourism and business plan.

-Whitefish River First Nation is receiving \$100,000 this year to conduct planning and preliminary work required to support the construction of a commercial industrial park.

-Wahnapiatae First Nation will receive \$97,570 this year to develop a plan that will determine if land in the community can support commercial and tourism activities.

“The AEDF helps Aboriginal communities diversify and create more resilient and sustainable economies,” said Minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer, in a press release.

“We’re excited to announce support for more projects that will help Aboriginal communities, businesses and organizations plan for future prosperity in northeastern Ontario.”

“We are excited about the support from the province in our project. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much,” said Franklin Paibomsai, Chief, Whitefish River First Nation.

Zimmer is in Sudbury today to visit a sports camp for aboriginal youth which has received support through Ontario’s Promotion, Celebration and Legacy Strategy for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

Direct Link: <http://www.northernlife.ca/news/localNews/2015/07/06-aboriginal-funding-province-sudbury.aspx>

McMurray Métis publishes revenue, expenses

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Wednesday, July 8, 2015 5:28:33 MDT PM



McMurray Métis President Gail Gallupe thanks participants before starting a closing prayer at the Métis Festival in Fort McMurray Alta. on Friday May 22, 2015. Garrett Barry/Fort McMurray Today

After a 12 month period that saw a change in government, a feud with an energy company and a drop in oil prices, the McMurray Métis are confident they will weather any storm over the next year.

McMurray Métis leadership voluntarily published their audited statements from the last year on Monday, and despite an “eventful” year, the local still managed a slight increase in their revenue and grew in members.

Between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, roughly \$2.96 million was raised during the period, a slight increase to the \$2.94 million raised in 2014. Approximately \$2.7 million was spent on expenses, with more than half spent on cultural projects and events. Expenses such as travel and conferences were at the bottom of expenses, totalling less than \$6,000.

Assets rose compared to the previous financial year, totalling \$2.4 million, an increase from last year’s \$2 million. Net assets for the local totalled \$2.1 million, compared to last year’s \$1.9 million. Collins Barrow Edmonton LLP completed the audit.

Under federal law, only First Nation governments are required to post their audited annual expenses. However, general manager Kyle Harrietha said leadership felt posting the expenses online was appropriate in the name of transparency and accountability.

Despite falling oil prices, Harrietha says McMurray Métis did not suffer financially, and the local held 33 active agreements with energy and pipeline companies, describing several developments as “productive.”

“Obviously things are a little slower right now around Fort McMurray and in the oilsands,” he said. “I think our audit has shown we are in a stable financial position. Our auditor indicated finances of the local are being well managed.”

A feud between the Métis and CNRL continued unresolved, regarding exploratory work CNRL plans for the area. CNRL has been given approval to test drill several areas near Gregoire Lake Provincial Park and close to the municipality’s Urban Development Sub-Region.

“We are always talking with those who have regulatory applications. The conversations are not always easy,” said Harrietha. “We engage in a dialogue with those companies and some are easier to engage than others.”

The province denied the Métis the opportunity to challenge the exploratory project last year. Harrietha hopes the new NDP government will work to create a Metis consultation policy for industry, as well as address issues other Métis locals are facing in Wood Buffalo.

Many rural hamlets with large Métis populations, such as Janvier and Conklin, lack running water and sewage. There are also concerns over a lack of policing, fire protection and nursing staff. While some of these issues are municipal, Harrietha hopes the NDP and the region’s new Wildrose MLAs will take an interest in the concerns.

“We will work with whatever officials the citizens of our region put into office,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/07/08/mcmurray-metis-publishes-revenue-expenses>

Aboriginal Community Development

First Nations University of Canada on the hunt for a missing teepee

By Kerry Benjoe, Leader-Post July 3, 2015



The First Nations University of Canada has lost one of its most treasured possessions.

REGINA — The First Nations University of Canada has lost one of its most treasured possessions.

Roland Kaye, FNUniv cultural liaison worker, is praying someone has found and will return a 20-foot teepee that he lost on Canada Day.

He took the teepee canvas out of storage like he has done many times before.

The canvas was rolled up and placed in a cylindrical plain canvas bag in the back of his truck and Kaye proceeded to drive to FNUniv to pick up the teepee poles.

“They wanted to use the teepee at Evraz Place because they wanted to do some counselling with some of the evacuees,” said Kaye.

He travelled down 4th Avenue then turned south onto Broad Street.

“I was by Broadway (Avenue) when I looked in my mirror and noticed my tailgate open,” said Kaye. “I looked in my truck box and no canvas. I turned back quickly and drove back hoping I dropped it where I had picked it up from.”

He drove up and down the same path several times before conceding that someone had already picked it up.

“I’m really hoping there is some goodness in the person who found and will return it to us,” said Kaye.

He feels responsible for the loss and is offering a reward for the teepee’s safe return.

“Because I am the one who looks after it, people don’t understand the way I felt (when it went missing),” said Kaye. “When something is in your possession, you cherish it. I still feel badly about it.”

To him, the teepee is more than just a canvas structure. It not only holds memories of the many elders he sat along side, but it symbolizes the institution because it has the FNUniv’s logo painted on it.

“I can’t put a monetary value on it, it’s more spiritual,” said Kaye. “It’s very important to me to find it.”

The university has followed up on some leads, but as of Thursday afternoon the teepee was not located.

If anyone locates the teepee and wish to return it they can call FNUniv 306-790-5290, visit the FNUniv Facebook page and send a message or contact the city police.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/First+Nations+University+Canada+hunt+missing+teepee/11183566/story.html>

Fires continue to threaten Saskatchewan communities, thousands evacuated

[National News](#) | July 3, 2015 by [Jaydon Flett](#)

Jaydon Flett

APTN National News

SUCKER RIVER, SASK.—Ongoing battles with wildfires in northern Saskatchewan have forced over 5,000 people to be displaced from their homes.

Although crews have been managing to keep the fires out of communities, flames came dangerously close to the Montreal Lake Cree Nation on Thursday afternoon.

Chief Edward Henderson said Thursday that the area was unsafe and the RCMP reported flames reached within a few kilometers of the community.

Workers just outside Montreal Lake were busy repairing a power line that had been struck down by unstable trees, causing a blackout in the community. Water bombers were also seen battling the flames from above to protect homes there from getting engulfed by the spreading fire.

In La Ronge, north of Montreal Lake, heavy smoke forced the shut-down of the highway as a result of low visibility. A thick blanket of smoke is the primary reason why over four-dozen communities have been partially or completely evacuated.

In Sucker River, a community that had been evacuated last week, a small group of volunteers remained behind in hopes of being able to protect the community.

Volunteers of all ages were busy cutting down trees, patrolling the streets and even feeding the dogs left behind, said Elder Miles Ratt.

Ratt said staying in the smoke-filled community was a scary experience, but it’s important for volunteers to protect the houses from flames and from outsiders. He said

there have been a couple of break-ins at the homes of evacuees and volunteers are doing all they can to save the community.

“They cut all these trees down, because they were thick here. That’s where the fire likes to travel fast,” he said, walking through the quiet, abandoned community, pointing out the make-shift sprinkler system attached to almost every roof.

Most of the homes are being doused around the clock by water pumped out of a nearby bog.

Despite that, Ratt said he is hoping for some rain.

“It’s very hard to predict,” he says. “We need rain. That’s what we need, is rain. But so far, no luck yet. The weatherman is not cooperating.”

With blue and partially smoky skies covering most of the province, it looks like there could be some time before the crews, or the weather, manage to get the fires under control.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/03/fires-continue-threaten-saskatchewan-communities-thousands-evacuated/>

Manitoba ombudsman to look at First Nations flood-fight purchasing

By Staff The Canadian Press, July 7, 2015 12:36 pm



An anonymous whistleblower complaint alleges cabinet minister Steve Ashton pushed to have a contract awarded to a company that supplies water-filled tubes called Tiger Dams.

WINNIPEG – Manitoba's ombudsman has agreed to look into the purchasing of flood-fighting equipment for First Nations.

Charlene Paquin said she aims to ensure proper procedures were followed in the decision to help reserves get flood-fighting equipment.

The government issued a tender last December for \$5 million worth of the equipment to help First Nations in the Interlake region.

An anonymous whistleblower complaint, filed with the provincial ombudsman last fall, alleged cabinet minister Steve Ashton pushed to have the contract awarded to a company that supplies water-filled tubes called Tiger Dams.

The whistleblower alleged two officials from the company have been Ashton campaign contributors and Ashton wanted to bypass the normal requirement to allow other companies to bid on the work.

Premier Greg Selinger has said the matter was discussed by cabinet and he directed that the contract be up for open bidding, which it was.

The Opposition Progressive Conservatives have called for an investigation, saying public money was involved.

The ombudsman's office has limited powers, as it can investigate government workers and departments, but not politicians.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2096544/manitoba-ombudsman-to-look-at-first-nations-flood-fight-purchasing/>

Repairing, rebuilding of First Nations housing choked by lack of funds

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 9, 2015 | Last Updated: July 9, 2015 8:58 AM EDT



Homes along a street in Kahnawake, south of Montreal, on Sunday, July 5, 2015. Peter McCabe / MONTREAL GAZETTE

Tony Wawatie laughed when asked what would happen if a building inspector combed through the dilapidated houses that line the streets of Barrière Lake First Nation.

“Building inspector? That would not go very well,” said Wawatie, the interim director of the Barrière Lake band council. “There’s always something wrong with the houses: a leaky roof, the floor is worn out, there’s mould in the walls, the foundation is collapsing. ... The most we can do with our limited budget is patchwork.”

To hear Wawatie describe it, the bungalows that house the Quebec reserve’s 700 residents sound more like shacks than places suited for family living.

Making matters worse, he says many of Barrière Lake’s homes don’t have smoke detectors, few are equipped with fire extinguishers and none of them are insured against property damage.

“When a house goes down, it goes down,” said Wawatie, who grew up on the Algonquin reserve about 350 kilometres north of Montreal. “There were stories, when I was a kid, about houses burning down and the community just standing there and watching helplessly.”

He added: “We have a fire brigade now, but these are old, dry wooden houses. A small fire could spread through a house in just minutes and it would just burst into flames. There’s not much we can do to stop that if it happens.”

The situation in Barrière Lake is far too common in First Nations across Canada, according to a Senate report released last week.

The 67-page document, filed by the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, points to two critical problems with on-reserve housing: first, there simply aren’t enough buildings to accommodate Canada’s rapidly growing First Nations population — as many as 85,000 houses may be needed to bridge that gap. And, second, much of the existing infrastructure violates Canada’s building codes and is therefore unsafe.

The consequences of the building code shortfalls are very real, says John Kiedrowski, whose testimony contributed to the report. Fire deaths occur at a greater rate in First Nations communities than among any other population subset in North America. The death rate associated with house fires is 10.4 times higher on-reserve than in non-aboriginal communities.

“The reality on most First Nations is that they’re building homes that aren’t complying with the national building code and that they’re only lasting an average of five, maybe six years,” said Kiedrowski, project manager of the First Nations National Building Officers Association.

“Homes have to undergo major repairs within five to six years. That’s major repairs and that’s major gutting and that’s homes you can’t move back into it because of mould or major structural issues.”

There is, the report finds, a lack of clarity over whose responsibility it is to draft and enforce bylaws designed to ensure housing is up to code.

The federal government maintains the onus is on individual First Nations, while many aboriginal communities say housing falls under Ottawa's purview. No legislation is in place to clarify that matter, according to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Confusing jurisdictional matters notwithstanding, one of the most meaningful building code regulations to emerge on First Nations came into effect only last year. In 2014, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation — which invests \$146 million in on-reserve housing — began requiring First Nations to submit inspection reports during at least three stages of construction.

Asked what measures the federal government has taken to ensure building codes are respected, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada sidestepped the question. In an email to the Montreal Gazette, a representative from the Aboriginal Affairs Department listed the Harper Government's accomplishments on aboriginal housing: 12,000 homes built and 22,000 homes renovated on reserves since 2006.

Though mounting evidence points to a nationwide housing crisis, things appear to be better on reserves inside Quebec. In Kahnawake, on Montreal's South Shore, the Mohawk band council has a rigorous building inspection process in place.

"We know this isn't the case everywhere, but we follow both the Canadian and Quebec building standards and we've even tweaked (the codes) to be stricter in some areas," said Martin Leborgne, the Kahnawake council chief in charge of housing.

"Our inspectors are certified former contractors with the power to stop work on a house if it isn't done right."

The Montreal Gazette spoke to band leaders in the Anishnabeg, Innu, Atikamekw and Cree First Nations, who all confirmed a similarly meticulous building inspection process. Some decry the oft-heralded stereotype of the corrupt band council that can't perform basic tasks.

"The truth is, we're seeing a huge shift in the way housing works on-reserve," said Dave Cassavant, a spokesperson for the Mashteuiatsh First Nation, near Lac St-Jean. "In the last decade we've built almost no social housing: we're seeing people take out loans, buy and build their own homes.

"And this is all up to code, blueprints are submitted ahead of time and the work is inspected. If it weren't, we have the power to shut construction down."

This isn't the case across the board, the Senate study says. If a First Nation has fallen under third party management or if just one band member defaults on a mortgage loan, it's often impossible for the band council to co-sign a mortgage or a loan for much-needed renovations.

Meanwhile, federal housing funds are proving insufficient to repair and rebuild communities whose people live in dangerous, overcrowded homes. And though legislation is in place to ensure new buildings are safe, existing infrastructure remains a problem.

"Things are good now, but about 10 years ago, maybe four in 10 houses on the reserve had to be gutted because of a mould problem," said François Niashit, grand chief of the

Wemotaci First Nation. “Most of the houses in our community built in the 1970s are no longer standing today.”

To create a cash flow that could fund repairs and infrastructure, Kiedrowski suggests more band councils begin collecting rent from their members.

“Even in communities with massive unemployment, people receive a shelter allowance that could go toward supporting and borrowing money to offset the problem,” Kiedrowski said.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s the Conservatives, the New Democratic Party or the Liberals — there’ll never be enough federal money to fix the problem outright. We have to get creative. ... It’s not that easy — in some cases it’s about First Nations regaining control over their resources and developing sustainable economies — but it needs to be a long-term solution.”

Back in Barrière Lake, where the band council is fighting the federal and provincial governments over resource revenue Hydro-Québec and forestry companies have accrued by exploiting traditional Algonquin territory, the housing problem seems to have no end.

“We only get about \$60,000 a year to fix 60 out-of-date homes, so we pick and chose,” Wawatie said. “It’s not fun to have to tell someone you know they live in a dangerous home and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/first-nations-housing-problems-linger-amid-signs-of-progress>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Police treat Aboriginal people as 'less than Canadian', Thunder Bay lawyer says

Francis Thatcher considers private criminal prosecution of OPP officer who injured his client

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 06, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 06, 2015 11:23 AM ET



Thunder Bay lawyer Francis Thatcher says its common for Aboriginal people to be injured by police and then find themselves charged with assault. (Francis Thatcher/LinkedIn)

A Thunder Bay, Ont., lawyer says he wants to take an Ontario Provincial Police officer to court for breaking the shoulder of a First Nations woman during her arrest.

Francis Thatcher is looking into the possibility of filing a private criminal prosecution or a civil suit against the police force and the officers who arrested Bonnie Muckuck in October 2013.

Muckuck was charged with assaulting her partner and then assaulting a police officer during her arrest in Pickle Lake, Ont. [The Anishinaabe woman was found not guilty on both charges](#) by a judge who also ruled the injuries to Muckuck were caused by police at the time of her arrest.

"This sort of a situation — with an Aboriginal person showing up in front of the court, injured, but being charged themselves with assaulting police — is unfortunately not uncommon in northern Ontario, and particularly in Pickle Lake," said Thatcher, who represented Muckuck at the assault trial.

'A foreign military occupying force'

Pickle Lake is located 20 kilometres north of Mishkeegogamang First Nation, Muckuck's home community. Thatcher said he is working with the First Nation leadership to determine how best to hold the police accountable.

Things have recently improved at the detachment in Pickle Lake, but Thatcher said often police "behaved like a foreign military occupying force" in the community.

"And [they] have treated the members of Mishkeegogamang First Nation and other Aboriginal peoples as less than Canadian, and they've been regularly abused," he said.

The province's police watchdog conducted an investigation into the conduct of the officers who arrested Muckuck. The Special Investigations Unit concluded in July 2014 that no criminal charges are warranted against the officers involved.

That decision, as well as the charges against Muckuck are "a terrible injustice that needed to be fought aggressively," Thatcher said.

The provincial police are not commenting on the situation because of the possibility of further judicial proceedings, a spokesperson said.

Thatcher said he plans to have a decision by the fall about whether to pursue the case in criminal or civil court.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/police-treat-aboriginal-people-as-less-than-canadian-thunder-bay-lawyer-says-1.3137773>

Alleged Aboriginal terror twins' father breaks parole doing drugs, blames terrorism charges

[National News](#) | July 7, 2015 by [Kenneth Jackson](#)



(Ashton Larmond, above. File photo)

Kenneth Jackson

APTN National News

While on statutory release for a nearly six-year federal sentence for robbing banks the father of two Algonquin men in Ottawa charged with terrorism offences is back in custody after admitting to illegally taking morphine.

When asked why he would break his parole, Anthony Larmond, 48, said the stress of his sons' terrorism charges was, in part, too much to handle.

"You admitted to your case management team that you had bought and used a hydro-morphine pill, as you were feeling alone, under stress due to your sons' serious criminal activity and bored due to reduced working hours," says Larmond's parole documents dated June 24.

Larmond is the father of Carlos and Ashton Larmond, 24, who were both charged by the RCMP in January for wanting to fly overseas and join the terrorist group ISIS. They claim to have converted to Islam several years ago.

They've been locked up at the local Ottawa jail since their arrests.

APTN previously reported [in February](#) the twins claim to be Algonquin, but it wasn't immediately known what First Nation they were from.

APTN has now learned they have cards saying they belong to the Bonnechere Algonquin First Nation.

Bonnechere is one of several non-status Algonquin First Nation's in the Ottawa area, under the Algonquins of Ontario banner, negotiating with the federal government for land and title rights.

APTN was told the twins have cards, along with identification numbers, from the band, currently located in Renfrew, Ont. about 100 km west of Ottawa.

It's not believed either has status, but were in the process of applying in February.

Bonnechere Chief Richard Zohr was contacted by *APTN* but he wasn't able to provide any information.

According to Bonnechere's website, it has 1,200 members with an "in depth history of its community dating back to the early 1600s."

Their father is a career criminal who has struggled with addictions.

Anthony Larmond is on his fourth federal sentence.

His past offences include 74 property related convictions and 55 breaches.

His latest breach happened March 24, about a week after the parole board removed a condition that he reside in a halfway house in Toronto. He was supposed to move into a Toronto community housing unit.

"Your criminal history includes three previous federal sentences, for robberies, assaults and property offences, and you have breached your conditions or re-offended while on each release," the parole board said.

His current sentence is for robbing two banks for about \$7,000 with his girlfriend to buy drugs in 2009.

APTN spoke to Anthony Larmond in February.

"I developed a drug habit and became institutionalized at a very young age," he said, adding he was 'strung out and at the end (his) rope' when he robbed the banks.

As for life on the outside, he said he was struggling.

“It’s not so bad when I’m working but it’s hard on the weekends,” he said.

He defended his sons’ who he said get their Algonquin lineage from his side of the family.

“They just wanted to go over there to (a) Muslim school to learn more about the Quran,” he said. “They told me they had no intention on joining ISIS.”

The twin’s lived with their grandmother, Anthony’s mom, in Ottawa. He would call there from prison, or at the halfway house, and sometimes speak to them, he said.

“Maybe some Native teaching will draw them away from Islam a bit,” he said at the time.

APTN also previously reported the twins say they’re “proud” of being Algonquin but were refusing to participate in any Aboriginal cultural activities while in custody.

It’s believed the twins are the first Aboriginal people in Canada to be charged with terrorism-related offences.

Anthony Larmond must reside at the Toronto halfway house until his full sentence expires in November.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/07/alleged-aboriginal-terror-twins-father-breaks-parole-drugs-blames-terrorism-charges/>

Police hope to build trust of aboriginal youth at Oskayak Police Academy

By Keltyn Marshall, Edmonton Journal July 8, 2015



Const. Stephan Vachon-Zee helps Robert Haaf, 14, put on gear worn by riot officers during a camp at Oskayak Police Academy.

EDMONTON - The Edmonton police hope to build leadership skills and empower aboriginal youth to build safer communities through a 10-day camp.

“I want to learn about what the police go through and what they do every day,” camp participant 15-year-old Jaurie Alexis-Flett said Wednesday. “I am excited to create a relationship with them.”

The camp, known as the Oskayak Police Academy, is for aboriginal youths 14 to 18 years old. After a successful pilot project last year, it has expanded this summer, with about 40 young people attending the police department’s Griesbach training centre.

The program focuses on providing a safe, culturally inclusive space for the youth and officers to communicate, challenge stereotypes, and learn.

Andrea Levey, the Edmonton police department’s aboriginal relations co-ordinator, said the camp helps officers gain a better understanding of the lives of aboriginal youth in Edmonton.

“We want to build trusting relationships between youth and police that will carry on,” she said.

Edmonton’s aboriginal community is the second largest in Canada.

The police department has acknowledged the need to build better relations and reduce victimization in the aboriginal community.

Christie Pace, a youth worker with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, said the camp helps youth gain trust in the police officers and encourages them to consider a career in policing.

“We’re just looking to break down some barriers, build relationships with the EPS and the Edmonton public,” she said.

The campers engage in various educational sessions, attend traditional cultural activities, and will help with community outreach programs downtown.

On Wednesday, participants watched a K-9 demonstration where police dog, Fozzy, took down a fake suspect. They also tried on the gear worn by riot control officers and took part in an intense obstacle course used for police recruits.

Officer Jason Reilly looks forward to showing the campers what he does every day.

“I want to give them a better understanding of what we go through on the job and provide them with the options and tools that we have to make sure everybody stays safe,” he said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Police+hope+build+trust+aboriginal+youth+Oskayak+Police+Academy/11198606/story.html>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Hell Yeah Prince George Good News Feature of the Week: First Nations student eyes film industry

Citizen staff / Prince George Citizen
July 2, 2015 06:23 PM



Philine West, member of the Frog Clan from the Lake Babine Nation in Burns Lake, has graduated from the Applied Business Technology program at the College of New Caledonia. - Handout photo

Philine West, a member of the Frog Clan from Lake Babine Nation in Burns Lake, has graduated from the Applied Business Technology program at the College of New Caledonia (CNC).

West will continue her education at Thompson Rivers University, seeking a diploma of management studies with a focus on human resources. She will use her newly learned skills to own a film business so she can tell the stories of her people.

West had originally considered applying for the carpentry program, but quickly realized she is better suited for business.

"It was hard at times, but I managed to finish thanks to the support of my family and friends," said West.

"They encouraged me the whole way through, and because of them, I learned that I love working in business."

West received a number of bursaries and scholarships to help with her education.

"Philine's sweet disposition and humble nature belies her intelligence, determination and numerous achievements. She is an outstanding student and her dedication is certainly reflected in her grades," said Jacquie Russell, instructor at CNC.

"I am confident that she is destined for success in her future studies and chosen career path."

For more good local news visit Hell Yeah Prince George's Facebook page at: [pgc.cc/1LGV63x](https://www.facebook.com/pgc.cc/1LGV63x).

See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/hell-yeah-prince-george-good-news-feature-of-the-week-first-nations-student-eyes-film-industry-1.1988381#sthash.ukiHthuz.dpuf>

Culture clash: How the foster care system is failing Canada's ethnic communities

[Maha Ansari, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: July 4, 2015 | Last Updated: July 4, 2015 4:55 PM EDT



Mumtaz Akhtar has been a foster parent to eight Muslim children but says the screening procedure may be too intrusive for many prospective Muslim foster parents to accept.

It's been 28 years since Michael and Suzanne Paquette took in a First Nations foster child for the first time.

Since then, the couple — who call themselves “white Canadians” — have fostered more than 15 children from First Nations communities in Ontario. While the Paquettes' foster children go on bike rides with Michael and read bedtime stories with Suzanne, the couple admits there is one thing they can never, fully share with the children in their home: the First Nations' culture.

“There is definitely a loss there for a child that is not grounded in their own culture completely,” says Michael, who advocates on behalf of foster families as chairman of the League of Ontario Foster Families.

“You can expose them to all of the stuff that you get to and you can make sure they understand that this is their culture and you can teach them all those things, but ... you can’t be that culture.”

While experts agree that matching every foster child with a parent of the same cultural background would be ideal, they know that’s impossible. Foster children in Canada are ethnoculturally diverse, but the supply of foster parents is not, according to a report published in October by the Child Welfare League of Canada. In fact, 84 per cent of Ontario’s foster parent population is made up of European-Canadians. In contrast, Aboriginals make up 40 per cent of foster children in Canada, but only four per cent of Ontario’s foster parent population.

“It’s difficult,” says Michael Paquette. “The resources simply aren’t there.”

Foster children who wind up in the care of families from different cultures may face “severely traumatizing” experiences, says Aaminah Ega. Ega is a liaison officer for CASFriends Child and Family Services, an Ottawa-based non-profit group that provides support services to Muslim families under the supervision of the Children’s Aid Society. As part of her work for CASFriends, Ega helps the agency place foster children in the care of foster families of the same culture.

Although Ega’s work focuses on Muslim foster children, she says “cultural matching” should be a priority when placing any child.

“You really don’t want kids to go through the trauma that can come from being thrown into a totally new culture,” says Ega. “Losing your culture is like losing your identity.”

Some families fostering children of different cultures do try to immerse these children in their native cultures. Suzanne Paquette says she enrolled in an Ojibwe language courses while fostering First Nations children in Fort Frances, Ont. The Paquettes have also participated in native cultural activities such as powwows and feasts alongside their foster children. But the couple admits they are limited in what they can teach their foster children about First Nations’ culture.

Promoting diversity among foster parents lies in understanding the barriers that prevent members of diverse cultural communities from volunteering to be foster parents, according to experts like Debbie Hoffman, a service director of the CAS’s Ottawa division. Some culture groups might find the assessments of foster parents too intrusive, for example. She admits those assessments include some “difficult questions.”

For example, a question about the sexual compatibility of prospective foster parents might seem too intrusive for members of conservative cultures, says Ega. Sex is a taboo subject in many Arab and Somali communities. Fear of the constant checks by social workers might also inhibit members of Muslim community from volunteering to be foster parents.

“I think for Muslims, privacy is a very important thing,” Ega said. “Also, if there’s a file on you, I think a fear that most people have is the idea that their personal life is ‘out there’.”

Mumtaz Akhtar, an Ottawa man who has fostered eight Muslim children since 2000, agrees the assessment process is overly intrusive. Akhtar says his desire to provide “an Islamic environment” for Muslim foster children outweighed his discomfort with the process. “Because I was so keen on becoming a foster parent, I co-operated,” he said.

But not all members of conservative cultural communities will be as willing as he was to undergo intrusive questioning to become a foster parent, Akhtar warns. “They have to relax the requirements to become foster parents.”

Many foster parents and child welfare workers say the financial requirements for becoming a foster parent are designed to fit families that are typically European Canadian.

Ega says many members of minority cultural communities tend to have smaller houses and more children. Many Somali-Canadians cannot become foster parents because their houses are deemed “too crowded,” she says. Families are not allowed to become foster parents if they cannot provide foster children with their own rooms, explains Ega.

Some cultural communities are smaller and tight-knit, raising the prospect of uncomfortable social situations, such as foster parents and their children coming into regular, unwanted contact with the child’s birth parents, Ega says.

“You don’t have much privacy as a foster parent because you’ll be moving in the same circles as the birth parent.”

Efforts are underway to break down barriers to cultural diversity, Hoffman says. For example, the Children’s Aid Society of Ottawa is using tools such as cultural advisory committees and partnerships with cultural organizations. As an example, Hoffman points to the agency’s partnership with Muslim Family Services of Ottawa, a social service agency that primarily caters to Ottawa’s Muslim community.

The CAS also has a liaison committee that meets every six weeks to develop recommendations on serving diverse communities.

The agency is working with groups such as CASFriends to organize foster parent recruitment events and improve diversity efforts. Hoffman says Children’s Aid Society of Ottawa tries to modify the foster care assessment process to make it more “culturally appropriate.” The question about sexual compatibility, for example, has been removed from the foster parent questionnaire.

Provincially, the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services has released a “diversity tool kit” that has guidelines on how residential services, including foster care providers, can embrace and promote diversity. However, a spokesperson from the ministry says the tool kit is for “informational purposes only,” so residential care agencies can choose not to use it.

Increasing cultural diversity among foster parents should be a priority for the province, says John Dunn, the former executive director of the Foster Care Council of Canada, a non-profit group that once lobbied for changes to child welfare policy.

“The government should be doing more public advertising and research to show that there is a need for cultural diversity in foster care,” he said. “I think that’s absolutely critical.”

Dunn says that in the 10 years he has spent advocating on behalf of children, he has never seen any legislation that addresses the issue of cultural diversity among foster parents. He says the government should collect more data on the cultural makeup of foster children and parents.

According to a spokesperson, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is reviewing the feedback on the Child and Family Services Act. There is no scheduled date for the release of an updated version, and some child welfare experts express doubt over whether an updated act will reflect the recommendations the ministry heard during the review.

Monique Taylor, the NDP Children and Youth Services critic, says the provincial government should educate the public on the lack of cultural diversity among foster parents and develop campaigns to recruit culturally diverse foster parents. She calls the lack of cultural diversity among foster parents is a “critical issue.”

“There definitely needs to be a lot more work in ... recruiting diverse parents,” she says. “I think it’s something we really need to be ringing the alarm bells about.”

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/culture-clash-how-the-foster-care-system-is-failing-canadas-ethnic-communities>

Teens helping guide aboriginal education

Samantha WRIGHT ALLEN / Prince George Citizen

July 2, 2015 08:05 PM



Isaiah Johnson, Maisie Woods, Tyler Adams and Victoria Alexander are part of School District 57's Aboriginal Education Department's youth research team. - Brent Braaten, Photographer

Victoria Alexander spent much of her time in elementary school in detention.

Her education troubles continued into high school and by Grade 9, she was skipping classes, consistently showing up late for school.

Enter the Eagle Centre at Prince George Secondary School and a land-based program that Alexander, now 19 and a graduate, said finally changed the course of her learning journey.

Taking the class felt like she was back at home in Takla Landing, hearing stories from the Takla Lake First Nation elders.

"It just felt right," said Alexander, who was also experiencing problems at home.

"It helped with a lot of stress issues, helped me focus and started to make me friends."

For more than two years, she's also been part of the school district's aboriginal education youth advisory research group.

"The youth, we're not only learners, but we're also teachers," said Alexander, who is one of four students involved since day one.

"The fact that we can share our experiences I think helps a lot."

"I wanted to help make a difference for my little siblings and cousins and make sure they don't make the same mistakes that me and my other peers made."

That's exactly why Shari Wallace, the aboriginal education department's researcher, brought them on board.

"They're the ones that any research is going to impact. We have to keep them at the centre of the process," Wallace said.

The goal of the youth group, the research Wallace is doing and School District 57's aboriginal education department more generally is to increase the appalling graduation rates and education outcomes for aboriginal learners.

"That happens in creative ways," said Wallace. "There's no magic wand. There's things that every school can do and creative ways that every staff person and teacher can look at."

In School District 57, the aboriginal graduation rate was 48.8 per cent compared to 81 per cent of non-aboriginal students in 2014.

"Projects work and especially projects where the kids can really believe in it and make a difference."

Alexander and her counterparts - Isaiah Johnson, 18, Maisie Woods, 17 and Tyler Adams, 18 - agree that hope is what kept them coming back for the monthly meetings.

"I just think it's an amazing opportunity to be able to try and help the future generation," said Adams. "I feel like we're moving forward a lot faster than I was even expecting which is awesome."

It's also been a forum to develop friendships and build communication skills, trust and self-esteem. Next summer, the department hopes to offer a transition program to target the vulnerable years from elementary to high school.

"That was 100 per cent youth driven," said Wallace, adding it will give Grade 7's a chance to meet new students to form stronger connections with peers and teachers.

But the students unanimously agreed the pinnacle of their work was the recent production of a documentary, called *Crow Brings a Message*, which will be made public in the fall.

The plan is to show the documentary to educators and principals as a conversation-starter.

"Hopefully that will make them realize what needs to be done and we can start implementing aboriginal education more in schools," Adams said.

Johnson, who will enter Grade 12 next year, was the student face of the documentary, asking questions of the district's superintendent, teachers and elders.

It was a challenge for Johnson, who said he struggles with communication.

"I'm not really the kind of person to go up and ask for help from one of my peers or a teacher. I try and do it on my own so that throws me behind pretty far," said Johnson.

Even so, Johnson recounts one moment in a Grade 9 science class when he was compelled to speak up.

The teacher asked a student to read a piece in the text book about spirit bears.

"When they got to a legend part of the story of the subject one of the students made a comment about how aboriginal words are too complicated and how... stupid it is."

Johnson shot his hand up and said: "This is my culture."

The comments stopped after that but he still feels the sting of that moment, and the need to defend his culture.

"I didn't really find it nice how he was being pretty arrogant and mean about aboriginal language considering all of our language is never written, it's always just said," said Johnson, who is Tsimshian, which translates to "People of the Skeena."

Alexander's advice is to address ignorance by asking questions.

"When you ask question you get a better understanding instead of just assuming," she said.

Education and the residential school system

Alexander's grandparents all went to residential schools. As she discussed the trauma that reverberates through generations, her eyes welled with unshed tears.

"It runs through the blood," said Alexander, recounting their issues with drugs and alcohol. Her father also "picked up the habit," of drinking.

"It's just that whole thing of trying to forget. They're trying to drown all their memories in alcohol and drugs and they don't know it but they're actually saying it when they're drunk.

"It's pretty shocking what you hear from them, when they got raped and beat, it's pretty scary."

It took years for her grandmother to get clean and address her memories of Lejac Residential School at Fraser Lake.

Lejac was home to 11 men charged with sexual and physical abuse as well as Edward Gerald Fitzgerald, charged of 21 counts of assault against 10 boys, and "one of the worst

documented individuals in the residential school system," according to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society. Fitzgerald fled to Ireland in 2002, a country with which Canada has no extradition treaty.

When Alexander was in elementary school, some teachers told a very different story.

"We heard about the residential school and how much it helped us," Alexander remembered.

"Some of the teachers said it was okay, it was good, but they didn't quite understand it themselves."

For Alexander, trust in teachers and counsellors has been a barrier, though she built better connections through the Eagle Centre and the aboriginal education department.

But understanding and acknowledgment of history can be a path forward.

"Not everyone agrees about it. They say it's in the past," said Alexander, recalling one classmate who asked why they had to learn about residential schools - a system that involved more than 130 schools, with the last one closed in 1996.

"It kind of hurt."

Talking has helped her come to terms with that past and her present.

"I learned a lot from the elders," she said, and touching on issues of domestic abuse:

"They're still children, they're lost.

"What they got taught, they teach it to their children and their children pick it up," she said.

"My father's not the best role model, but he still deserves love."

She sees herself as an elder in training.

"I learned from my parent's mistakes so that's why I'm somewhat better I guess.

"Me and my siblings are trying to break that habit," she said of alcohol abuse.

"We just gotta learn how to break that cycle."

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/teens-helping-guide-aboriginal-education-1.1988416#sthash.ccA5cIV2.dpuf>

Yukon First Nations youth gather to talk troubles and healing

Strength Within Circle conference brings Mary Spencer, Ryan McMahon to Whitehorse

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 04, 2015 12:15 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 04, 2015 12:15 PM CT



"In this room we're all fighters, whether we realize we've been in battles or not," Olympic boxer Mary Spencer told Yukon First Nations youth. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Ten First Nations are taking part this weekend in a healing camp hosted by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation at Jackson Lake.

The camp is intended for people under 30. It features counsellors and inspirational speakers such as Olympic boxer Mary Spencer and comedian Ryan McMahon.

Located outside of Whitehorse at a facility usually used for the on-the-land treatment of addictions, the Strength Within Circle conference is about preventative care, encouraging young people to stay healthy and think positive.

Jessie Dawson, a councillor with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, said people are there to talk about education, youth, bullying, drugs and alcohol.

"We've all had losses and we've all had issues, regarding our lives and it's a matter of learning the tools and the supports that you need," Dawson said. "To help yourself to move ahead. And knowing what's right and wrong and also the most important part is asking for help."

'You can't be serious all the time'

Isaiah Gilson of the Kluane First Nation said there is pain at the conference, but there's a lot of humour too.

"It's not all serious. I know a lot of people in our community like to be like that. If you hang out with elders, they're always joking they're always having a good time. As well there are bigger issues but you can't be stressed, you can't be serious all the time."



Isaiah Gilson of the Kluane First Nation said that while there is pain at Strength Within Circle, there is humour too. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

The purpose of the weekend is "having those awkward conversations that need to be talked about," Gilson said.

"You need to be in a safe space, a comfortable space to bring that up, and the supports need to be there. If someone wants to bring up some traumas or pain, the community is here for them, we're here for them."

For Kindra Stewart of Pelly Crossing, it's also a chance to let the bad stuff go.

"[I'm here to] heal myself, take all my bad energy ... come to the woods," she said.

'We're all fighters'

Spencer, the first Canadian woman to box at the Olympics, said she wanted to speak at the conference because she had role models and good advice during her teenage years. She said it's inspiring for to speak with aboriginal youth.

"I've realized that more than a boxer, I realize what it is to be a fighter, and that everyone in this room we're all fighters, whether we realize we've been in battles or not," she told the gathering.

McMahon said he hopes to instill a sense of belonging in aboriginal youth.

"The difficulty is that when you're feeling alone, when you're feeling down... as a young person it's really hard to take a look around you and see who's there or see what kind of help is around you," [he told Sandi Coleman on CBC's A New Day.](#)

"What I try to focus on when I work with young people is to remind them that you are where you are right now, and that difficult circumstances, difficult situations are only temporary."

Organizers hope Strength Within Circle reminds Yukon First Nation youth that they're part of a community that cares about them.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-youth-gather-to-talk-troubles-and-healing-1.3138571>

Adoptions in B.C.: A Changing Landscape

Many vulnerable children still need homes. The province is trying to reduce their wait

By Lori Culbert and Tracy Sherlock, Vancouver Sun July 4, 2015

There are more than 1,100 families in B.C. waiting to adopt, and about 1,300 children in government care who hope to find a permanent home.

The solution might appear obvious, but the reality is complicated, emotionally charged and often tediously slow.

While these families desperately want a child, the majority — more than 800 of them — are registered for international adoptions, not to adopt a child in foster care. The reasons for that are complex, often linked to worries about special needs, the age of the children and ongoing contact with birth parents.

The state of adoption in B.C. today is in flux. It is no longer the experience of the 1950s and '60s when there were many babies to adopt: the stigmas around abortion and single motherhood pressured women to give up their newborns, and many native children were apprehended from reserves and handed to white families as part of the failed effort at assimilation.

Nor is it like the mid-2000s, when couples had a relatively easy time adopting children from abroad.

Today, both foreign countries and B.C. First Nations are increasingly uncomfortable having their children adopted by people from different cultures, and are trying to keep their kids closer to home.

Adoption is a dirty word in many native communities, too closely aligned with the horrific memories of residential schools stealing their children.

“The biggest tragedy when we look at the number of aboriginal kids in care, that’s a really close comparison to the number of kids in the care of residential schools at the height of the residential school system,” said Lise Haddock, an aboriginal consultant overseeing a government project to improve adoption rates for native foster children.

“We replaced one system with another system.”

Aboriginal children make up half the kids in government care, and there is a desperate need to find them homes. They have become “stuck” in the foster system because of a disconnect between government and First Nations, who must have a “more honest, trusting” relationship to find solutions, says a new report by children’s representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.

There has been an emphasis in recent years to find culturally appropriate adoptive homes. That often requires approval from the child’s First Nation, so it takes on average nearly three years to get aboriginal children adopted, much longer than their non-native peers.

And because children are now typically older than two before being approved for adoption (to allow time for birth parents to get healthier or to look for relatives who can raise them), that often means native kids are five or older before the process is complete.

This lag time is not ideal. Experts agree that children adjust better to new homes the younger they are adopted.

Prospective parents are also frustrated by a process that takes much longer than in the past. Foreign countries, like First Nations, now typically delay the release of children until all options to keep infants closer to their home communities have been exhausted.

“What used to take one year now can take five to six years,” said Karen Madeiros, executive director of the Adoptive Families Association of B.C. “For adoptive parents, adoption has radically shifted and it’s very, very sad. It is incredibly sad because options are just not available.”

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There is no shortage of people wanting to adopt, in part fuelled by couples waiting longer to have children and by more same-sex unions.

Under B.C. law, there are two main routes to adoption: Applying for a government ward through the Ministry of Children and Family Development, or going to one of four government-licensed agencies that mainly focus on babies from another country or children who are not in the care of the province. The ministry completed about 270 adoptions last year, while about 140 were done by the non-profit agencies based in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Victoria and Kelowna.

Ministry kids represent an increasing proportion of the adoptions in B.C. each year — not because their numbers are rising, but because the other options are on the decline.

The government-licensed agencies:

- Have more than 800 applications from people waiting to adopt a child from another country.

Between 2006 and 2010, about 200 children from other countries were adopted each year in B.C., but that was nearly cut in half by 2014 to just 117. This is mainly due to countries like China, Russia and Ethiopia changing rules and priorities for their orphaned children, according to a March 2015 article in Focus on Adoption magazine.

- Have even more registered families, beyond those 800, looking for infants willingly placed for adoption by birth parents, although these numbers are small. In recent years, fewer than 40 of these adoptions have been arranged annually.

B.C. infants available from these agencies are thought to be at lower risk of prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol, compared to foster children. Typically, birth parents choose from a list of prospective adoptive parents who will raise their baby, and continue to have some contact with the family and child.

- Facilitate direct-placement adoptions, when birth parents choose a non-relative they already know to raise their child. These are rare, with just 13 completed in B.C. in 2012/2013.

(Adoptions by relatives are handled by the courts, and are not tracked by the government.)

These four agencies are working with the ministry in its high-profile pledge to do a better job of finding adoptive homes for more of the government’s waiting foster kids.

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In B.C., 284 homes approved by the ministry are waiting to adopt a foster child, a slightly higher number than in the previous two years.

There are 941 children in B.C. who are now eligible to be adopted after being seized by the ministry, usually because their birth families are unable to provide a safe and nurturing home. An additional 350 kids are poised to be added to that list as soon as their cases clear final legal and bureaucratic hurdles.

The number of foster kids adopted each year had been falling for a decade — from a high of 338 in the fiscal year 2002-03 to a low of 213 in recent years. A scathing 2014 report by Turpel-Lafond said the decline in adoptions was mainly due to a lack of resources and to a lack of government urgency.

In response, the ministry vowed last year to increase annual adoptions to 300 by the end of the government's fiscal year in March 2015. It fell short of its goal, completing just 270.

It is important to meet this new target to reduce the number of children waiting for homes because, over the last five years, roughly the same number of kids has entered the adoption system as the number adopted out.

Children's Minister Stephanie Cadieux, who acknowledged her ministry failed in recent years to emphasize adoption, has pledged to complete 330 adoptions by March 2016 — 300 from this fiscal year and the 30 that weren't done last year.

"When we set the target last year, we were being ambitious. I don't regret that — I would have even liked to be more ambitious because ultimately what we want to see is kids moved into forever homes as soon as possible," said Cadieux.

"I think, over time, the work around adoption had been kind of put a little bit on the side to other work in the ministry and it's very important to me ... that we bring it back up to the front because ultimately, what's most important is the well-being of kids. There's no better place for kids to be than in a permanent home."

With 284 adoptive families approved to take children right now in B.C., the ministry technically has enough available homes to meet that goal (should some families take more than one child, since there is an emphasis on trying to keep siblings together).

So what is the hold up?

It is partly because more aboriginal adoptive parents are needed, as well as more homes that can be matched to the specific special needs of some of the waiting kids.

It is partly because the number of adoption-specific social workers in the province once numbered more than 100, and is now half that.

It is mainly because the process is slow. It takes an average of 26 months for a child to go from being approved for adoption (after any number of years in foster care) to being adopted. It was slower for aboriginal children (32.5 months) and faster for non-aboriginal children (23 months).

Native people make up only five per cent of B.C.'s population, so the disparity of aboriginal kids representing half the children in care is a focus for leaders in this field.

Of the 284 families in B.C. waiting to adopt ministry children, only 43 are aboriginal. Cadieux said the government is working with friendship centres and native agencies to find more aboriginal homes.

The government had some success last year, placing 99 aboriginal youth for adoption compared to 75 in the two previous years; roughly half of the native kids in each of those years went to aboriginal homes.

The answer may also be a shift away from adoption and toward some innovative approaches.

One alternative, Cadieux said, is transfers of guardianship within native communities — arrangements made through provincial court, which are less binding than adoptions — for someone other than the parents to raise a child. These are at an all-time high, with 403 approved last year in B.C.

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There are, however, still non-aboriginal families adopting aboriginal children, a practicality given the tiny number of available native homes.

And for some aboriginal kids, like Dominique Ward and her four brothers, this has been a good outcome because her white adoptive parents ensure she is exposed to her First Nations culture.

When she was 11, Dominique wrote a letter in her childish scrawl to tell social workers the five of them wanted to be adopted by their foster parents, Cheryl and Allan Ward.

She and her brothers, then aged four to nine, had lived a tumultuous life, seized at early ages from their birth parents who battled addictions. They were in and out of foster care, back and forth to their well-meaning but struggling biological family, before moving into the Ward house in Chilliwack.

Dominique loved her biological parents but feared they would never be healthy enough to raise her and knew she was in a safe home. The Wards take her to visit her birth family, both sides of which were torn apart by residential schools, and promote her culture by participating in cedar brushing, cultural camps, sweat lodges, drum making, powwows and canoeing.

So, she wrote the letter asking if they could stay.

“I did feel responsible because they were my little brothers and I didn’t want them to have the life that we already started to have,” she said in an interview.

In April, Dominique, now 16, and her four brothers were officially adopted by the Wards.

“It was a long wait but it was definitely worth it because we are part of this family now,” she said. “It was important because it meant finding permanency and finding our ground.”

It took five years for Dominique’s adoption to be completed because her birth parents’ First Nations weren’t keen about a white family adopting five kids from their communities. Cheryl Ward understood that apprehension, but lobbied social workers and met native elders to seek their approval.

On the day of the official adoption, the Ward family, members of Dominique's biological family and band members participated in a traditional native ceremony with blankets, head pieces and drums so that the adoptions were culturally acknowledged.

Turpel-Lafond, who is a member of the Muskeg Cree Nation, argued placing aboriginal kids in good-quality, non-aboriginal homes is much better than them having no permanent home at all.

"When I see children who have been languishing in care for multiple years without even a single effort at family-finding, and sometimes foster home to foster home — especially when they get to their middle years and teen years — that is a source of incredible frustration to me," she said. "Those kids, they certainly ask me straight up, 'What is it about me, that nobody wants me?'"

Haddock, the consultant leading the project by the ministry and the children's representative to improve adoption rates for aboriginal kids, would like to have native children raised in their own communities. But she also recognizes there is a lot of work to do before that can happen.

"The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (are valid) — we need to put resources back into nations and start creating stronger supports for families. The child welfare system is broken and we need to mend it," she said.

The first recommendation in Justice Murray Sinclair's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, released last month, was for all governments to reduce the number of aboriginal children in care by providing resources to keep native families together, when it is safe to do so, or to keep children in culturally appropriate environments.

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Another of Sinclair's recommendations was for governments to work with aboriginal people to create programs to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Most of the children in ministry care have some variation of special needs.

More than 35 per cent have a confirmed or suspected case of being exposed to alcohol or addictive drugs in the womb. Thirty-two per cent have medical issues (such as AIDS, autism, ADHD, anxiety, etc.) and/or emotional issues which are often linked to the trauma of being taken from their birth parents. Twelve per cent have genetic risks of developing a mental disability, such as mood disorders or schizophrenia.

Twenty per cent are listed as having no special needs, but that number is misleading because they include children who are expected to be adopted by their foster parents and therefore their details are not tracked as carefully by social workers, the ministry said.

Turpel-Lafond is concerned social workers sometimes "scare" prospective parents by asking if they are prepared to take a child with special needs, presumably to ensure the adults are equipped to handle the extra challenges.

But she, and many adoptive parents who spoke with The Sun for this series, argue that while children with special needs may require additional attention, they can be loving and rewarding family members.

“The children in care are not really any different than other children. A label is a label. Many children have special needs but that does not define who they are,” said Turpel-Lafond, who is on leave from her job as a provincial court judge in Saskatchewan.

Nearly 200 of the 284 waiting adoptive families have agreed to take “high” special needs children, those with quite serious challenges.

Cadieux, who has used a wheelchair since a car accident at age 18, said there is no guarantee in life about any child — biological or adopted — developing a mental or physical disability.

“Every family goes through challenges. Adopting a child who uses a wheelchair may require some modifications to your home, but it doesn’t mean you can’t love that child and you’d be a great parent for that child,” she said.

Adoptions, though, may not be a top funding priority for the fiscally-conservative Liberal government. Revamping adoption was listed 11th out of 12 goals for the ministry in a recent mandate letter sent by Premier Christy Clark to Cadieux.

Last year and this year, the ministry committed one-time funding of \$2 million on top of its \$27-million annual adoption budget in an effort to reach its goal of finding more adoptive homes. That crucial money is not guaranteed next year.

The ministry, though, is starting a project to study how to speed up the time between prospective parents being approved for adoption and being linked with a child.

For example, it could streamline the process first for foster parents who want to adopt, because they already have an established relationship with the ministry, said Anne Clayton, ministry executive director of guardianship, adoption and permanency. After that, the focus could be on general applications, as the ministry knows it could lose parents willing to adopt if the wait is too long.

The ministry will also consider ways to reduce administrative tasks required of its adoption social workers so they can spend more time on finding placements for children.

The government has achieved 300 annual adoptions only five times in the past quarter century. In those years, the ministry operated a focused program backed by money — similar to today’s effort.

Typically, the adoption numbers peaked one or two years after those programs were launched, which makes Clayton cautiously optimistic B.C. will meet its 330 goal by March 2016.

There are many waiting children and prospective parents who hope that comes true.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Adoptions+Changing+Landscape/11186762/story.html>

School boards crucial to aboriginal education, Paul Martin says

By Jonathan Charlton, The Starphoenix July 6, 2015



Local school boards can play a crucial role in helping improve aboriginal education, which in turn can help Canada be competitive internationally, former prime minister Paul Martin said Saturday at the Canadian School Boards Association annual conference in Saskatoon. Martin, who founded the Martin Aboriginal Educational Initiative, spoke to reporters after his conference talk.

Local school boards can play a crucial role in helping improve aboriginal education, which in turn can help Canada be competitive internationally, former prime minister Paul Martin said Saturday at the Canadian School Boards Association annual conference in Saskatoon. Martin, who founded the Martin Aboriginal Educational Initiative, spoke to reporters after his conference talk.

Why did you want to come to today's conference?

I think Canadian school boards are incredibly important. They really are one of the linchpins in terms of primary and secondary school education. The Saskatchewan school boards took the lead in terms of our entrepreneurship program, which has been a huge success, and it's that kind of leadership that I believe should be recognized.

Why is the relationship between school boards and First Nations important?

First Nations are taking more and more control of their education system. There are phenomenal aboriginal educators out there, some of the leading educators in the country are aboriginal.

Given the fact indigenous Canadians are the youngest, the fastest-growing segment of our population, it only makes sense they're going to play a more important role in education

and the school boards have an enormous amount of experience and they can be a link really between the non-aboriginal community and the aboriginal community.

Does there need to be a federal education ministry? You mentioned it's hard to lobby for aboriginal education funding at the cabinet table without a specific minister.

I think it's absolutely crucial the federal government pay its fair share of aboriginal education. It is not doing so. On-reserve education is underfunded and that's discriminatory, it's immoral, and it's really economically dumb.

What about underlying issues, such as addictions?

There are a wide range of issues - health issues, addictions - that have got to be dealt with. It is my view that education is the foundation that is going to essentially enable the First Nations to turn this around.

What's the single biggest thing a Saskatchewan school board can do to make a difference?

I think to essentially work with the First Nations, work with the First Nations schools, and I think we're already seeing that. Also, I think there are tremendous leaders - (Whitecap) Chief Darcy Bear, who we heard today, is one of them. So I think this is a question of partnerships.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/School+boards+crucial+aboriginal+education+Paul+Martin+says/11190773/story.html>

Trudeau to roll out plan to bolster funding for aboriginal education

By Kristy Kirkup The Canadian Press, July 7, 2015 4:40 am



WATCH: Liberal leader Justin Trudeau unveiled the party's First Nations platform Tuesday at the annual AFN general assembly.

OTTAWA – Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau is set to deliver a series of campaign-style commitments in Montreal on Tuesday as indigenous leaders meet for an annual gathering of the Assembly of First Nations.

In a speech this afternoon, Trudeau is poised to promise bolstered funding for aboriginal education.

Trudeau also plans to address the need to overhaul the relationship between First Nations and the federal government, such as targeting the growing socio-economic gap that exists between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians in areas including employment, Ottawa sources tell The Canadian Press.

The Liberals have already tapped AFN regional chief Jody Wilson-Raybould to run as the Grit candidate in the new B.C. riding of Vancouver-Granville.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair is also set to deliver a speech at the AFN event in Montreal, but his party has yet to indicate if he will make policy announcements during his remarks.

The government's relationship with aboriginal people has been under the microscope in recent weeks following the release of a scathing report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which described Canada's residential school system as "cultural genocide."

The commission's summary report said the current relationship with the federal government and aboriginal peoples is "deteriorating" due to ongoing conflicts over education, child welfare, and justice.

Aboriginal education has been a particularly thorny issue for both the government as well as the AFN.

In February 2014, federal Conservatives thought they had the support of the AFN's then-national chief Shawn Atleo and other indigenous leaders when they announced \$1.9 billion in federal money for a First Nations education act.

Some indigenous leaders were opposed to the legislation because they felt it gave the federal government too much control.

The deal subsequently dissolved and led to Atleo's departure as head of the AFN that May.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt continues to defend the government's legislation and says it met the conditions outlined by the AFN and aboriginal leaders. But there has been no sign of any meeting of the minds that would allow an education deal to progress.

Valcourt's office has confirmed he is not attending the assembly's annual gathering.

"Minister Valcourt is attending important events for the people of Madawaska-Restigouche, in New Brunswick," said press secretary Emily Hillstrom. "He remains committed to working with all willing First Nation partners on shared priorities such as economic development, skills training, education and addressing section 35 rights."

Saskatchewan's Perry Bellegarde, who became AFN national chief in December 2014, has continued to call on the government to address another issue – the number of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Bellegarde wants to see a national public inquiry to address the crisis. This call has also been supported by opposition parties, provincial and territorial premiers and United Nations' special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples James Anaya.

The Conservatives continue to reject the idea of an inquiry and argue more study is not needed.

Last March, Valcourt drew the ire of some First Nations after he said 70 per cent of murdered aboriginal women were killed by aboriginal men. They felt the minister was placing blame on indigenous people.

But the minister's comments have since been supported by new RCMP statistics which indicate aboriginal women continue to be most frequently killed by men they know.

The RCMP data, released in June, showed female victims, regardless of their ethnicity, continue to be targeted most often by men within their own homes and communities.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2095879/trudeau-to-roll-out-plan-to-bolster-funding-for-aboriginal-education/>

First Nations education issues discussed at conference

Published on July 07, 2015

Ideas about how to employ lessons learned from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were shared at last week's Canadian School Boards Association conference in Saskatoon.



Aboriginal education events, like the one that took place last month in Crescent Park, were discussed at last week's national school trustees meeting in Saskatoon.

Prairie South trustee Jan Radwanski attended the conference with four other people from Moose Jaw and area school boards, including Ron Gleim and Lew Young from the Prairie South School Division and Lucy Gehl and Debbie Olesen attended from the Holy Trinity Catholic School Board.

Radwanski, was the only one from Prairie South to take part in the national gathering on Aboriginal education.

"It was out at Wanuskewin for the first day, so that was always a treat to be there," he said. "What they really emphasized there, the guest speakers, one of the main recommendations is to have education around residential schools. For a trustee, for me that put things in perspective.

"We have to make sure that... this isn't First Nations history, this is Canadian history. These events need to be carried out in the classroom in terms of the education around it and what happened and the ramifications of it."

There are 79,000 residential survivors in the country and there remain a lot of people still affected by what they went through in their experience in the school system.

Last month, the school division created a day for celebration for aboriginal people at Crescent Park close to National Aboriginal Day that was well attended by students.

"I've personally seen (with) my children and have seen examples in our schools here that education is taking place," Radwanski said. "I think we have a framework and a foundation for moving forward with regard to the TRC having more education shed on what happened."

Radwanski said there was also a presentation on how to provide better opportunities for people from the northern part of the province.

"It was about how they're encouraging people to go into all sorts of occupations and return to the North and help build the economy and the communities," he said. "One of the speakers made the good point that it's the highest GDP areas in our country in the North and yet they're the lowest income."

In a province with a growing aboriginal population, there is a focus on graduation rates, he said.

The next meeting for the Prairie South School Board is Aug. 11.

Direct Link: <http://www.mjtimes.sk.ca/News/Regional/2015-07-07/article-4206684/First-Nations-education-issues-discussed-at-conference/1>

AFN chief calls on Ottawa to re-engage on First Nation education discussions

Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press

Published Tuesday, July 7, 2015 4:53AM EDT

Last Updated Wednesday, July 8, 2015 8:31AM EDT

MONTREAL -- National Chief Perry Bellegarde says he will not use his influential role as the head of the Assembly of First Nations to strike deals with the federal government without the full support of First Nations.

It's a promise that speaks to a long period of upheaval within the AFN, and the rocky relationship between the organization and the federal government.

Chiefs are gathered in Montreal for their annual meeting this week -- Bellegarde's first as national chief.



Assembly of First Nations national Chief Perry Bellegarde gives the keynote speech at the AFN's annual conference in Montreal on Tuesday, July 7, 2015. (Ryan Remiorz / THE CANADIAN PRESS)



NDP Leader Tom Mulcair addresses the Assembly of First Nations congress in Montreal on Tuesday, July 7, 2015. (Ryan Remiorz / THE CANADIAN PRESS)



A First Nations headdress sits on a table as Federal Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau addresses the Assembly of First Nations congress in Montreal on Tuesday, July 7, 2015. (Ryan Remiorz / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

He took the reins from Shawn Atleo, who abruptly resigned in the spring of 2014 due to controversy over his support for the federal government's First Nations education act announced the previous winter.

As he reflects on the events that led to his predecessor's departure, Bellegarde is vowing not to make the same mistakes.

"There was a lack of awareness and communication about it on everybody's side. And as the new national chief with a new mandate, I will not be doing those kinds of agreements," Bellegarde said in an interview on the sidelines of the Montreal gathering. "That's the reason that that failed, and I am not going to fail on any new things coming forward."

Bellegarde was in the room in February 2014 when Stephen Harper publicly announced the \$1.9 billion education deal with Atleo in front of the national media.

He insists he was never on board with the deal, but attended that day to "find out what was going on."

"That's the truth," he said.

The education package, and Atleo's support of it, remain contentious. The AFN's newly-elected Ontario regional chief, Isadore Day, wonders if indeed there ever was a real deal on the table.

"Do we know what was attached to the deal?" Day said. "Do we know who actually struck the deal?"

Day said there "certainly seemed to be something wrong" with the way the agreement was reached, including a lack of implementation plan.

"The former national chief had a lot of back-door dealings and discussions on that which we never knew took place," Day said.

Bellegarde said the AFN has learned that it has to be "more transparent and open" in everything it does. But he said now is the time to move forward.

"Now we've learned," he said. "We have a lot of opportunity to close the gap and bring about change and start fresh with new relationships. And that's where my head goes."

Bellegarde is hopeful the government will sit down with the AFN again to establish a national fiscal framework for education, but he said the Conservatives have not come to table yet.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt did not attend the Montreal gathering but his office issued a statement to indicate the government is taking steps to improve the well-being of First Nations by enabling them to take "full advantage of Canada's economic prosperity."

"Our government believes that Aboriginal peoples should have the same quality of life and the same opportunities as all other Canadians," said press secretary Emily Hillstrom.

The government also insists the education funding will still be available -- for First Nations that support the connected legislation.

Bellegarde has been lobbying all federal parties to address issues such as overcrowding, housing and access to clean drinking water in their election platforms.

The AFN continues to urge First Nations to become engaged in the political process.

The advocacy group has identified 51 swing ridings that could be affected if First Nations voters flock to polling stations.

"Our objective is to ensure that our First nations people are educated and aware of the impact they can have if they so choose," Bellegarde said.

Both NDP Leader Tom Mulcair and Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau attended the chiefs' gathering to rollout their election platforms for aboriginal policy.

Mulcair offered a "new era" of nation-to-nation relations with indigenous communities if he becomes prime minister in October.

The NDP plans to commit to a "government-wide" approach to address aboriginal affairs.

Trudeau also unveiled a series of commitments on Tuesday, including a promise to bolster funding for aboriginal education. He did not disclose the pricetag that would be attached to this.

Trudeau also addressed the need to reset the relationship between First Nations and the federal government.

But some chiefs remain skeptical.

"They're not going to do nothing for us if they get in," said Reginald Bellerose from the Muskowekwan First Nation in Saskatchewan. "They're going to avoid us if they get in."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/afn-chief-calls-on-ottawa-to-re-engage-on-first-nation-education-discussions-1.2457086>

Aboriginal Health

Aboriginal doctors in demand

Number of First Nations doctors in Saskatchewan disproportionately low but climbing

By Andrea Hill, The Sta Rphoenix July 4, 2015



Cora Mirasty is a third-year med student at U of S, pictured here doing a junior undergraduate resident student internship in family medicine at St. Paul's Hospital in March. Mirasty, who entered the course at age 30, is the first member of Lac La Ronge Indian band to go to medical school and wants to provide health care on northern reserves once she graduates.

Growing up in Prince Albert, Cora Mirasty was never treated by an aboriginal doctor.

The same was true when the Lac La Ronge Indian Band member later moved to the northern Saskatchewan communities of Stony Rapids, Wallaston Lake and Fonddu-Lac to teach math and science.

"I didn't really think about it too much," Mirasty said.

"It would have been nice, though, to have somebody, a doctor, who would understand how I grew up and my culture, my belief system."

Mirasty's experience is not unusual. Though 16 per cent of Saskatchewan's population identify as aboriginal - a Statistics Canada number expected to climb above 20 per cent by 2031 - fewer than five per cent of the province's roughly 2,500 doctors are aboriginal.

That's in spite of the fact that aboriginal people are known to experience poorer health than the rest of Canadians - with higher rates of diabetes, obesity, disability and infectious diseases such as tuberculosis - and could presumably have more frequent interactions with the health care system.

Mirasty had dreamt of becoming a doctor while she was in high school, but enrolled in the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program after she'd completed Grade 12 and went on to be a high school math and science teacher.

It wasn't until her students chastised her for abandoning her dreams while encouraging them to follow theirs that she quit her job and moved to Saskatoon in 2010 to take the courses she needed to be able to apply to medical school. Her husband and son stayed in Prince Albert and Mirasty balanced her classes with frequent trips to visit them.

Two years later, when she was 30 years old, Mirasty was accepted into the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine. She would become the first member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band to go to medical school.

"I probably would have gotten into medicine sooner if I'd had an aboriginal doctor that I'd seen or knew who was encouraging me to get into medicine," said Mirasty, who's now completed her third year of the program.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan does not track doctors' ethnicity and does not know how many aboriginal doctors work in Saskatchewan.

But the U of S College of Medicine keeps tabs on its graduates and knows the number of aboriginal doctors is climbing, largely because of its aboriginal equity program, founded in 1992, that reserves 10 per cent of its now 100 first-year medical school seats for qualified aboriginal students who are judged against other aboriginal applicants instead of the rest of the applicant pool. Those seats are not always filled if not enough qualified applicants apply or not all who get in accept their offer.

The college has graduated 63 selfdeclared aboriginal students since its inception in 1926. More than half of those - 36 - graduated within the last five years, including 10 who graduated this spring as part of the college's largestever class of aboriginal students.

Thirty-one self-declared aboriginal medical students currently enrolled in the College of Medicine, including Mirasty, are expected to graduate over the next four years.

Most graduates who've been out of school for at least a year - 36 of 53 - are practising in Saskatchewan. Another nine are in Alberta while three are elsewhere in Canada and three are outside the country. There are no data on the number of aboriginal doctors in Saskatchewan who went to medical school outside of the province.

The growing number of aboriginal doctors in Saskatchewan is good news for Saskatoon residents Sharon Acoose and Teedly Linklater, who went searching for aboriginal physicians after experiencing racism at the hands of nonaboriginal doctors.

"I've had such horrible experiences with doctors in the past," said Acoose, an associate professor at the First Nations University of Canada.

She remembers visiting a doctor shortly after moving to Saskatoon in 2002.

"He looks at my name on the chart. He says 'Oh, Acoose.' He says he used to live down by Sackimay and he used to see a lot of those people, those Acooses, and they were all drug addicts," she said.

"I was really taken aback so I tried not to be pissed because I was."

Linklater, a single mother of four, also encountered racism in the Bridge City.

"When I was pregnant, they'd ask me if my baby was going to have FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) ... They always say 'How many kids do you have? How many more are you going to have? Are you going to get your tubes tied after?'" Linklater recalled.

"They put that on me just because I was First Nations." Acoose and Linklater eventually found the Packham Avenue Medical Clinic on one of Saskatoon's urban reserves.

Founded by Dr. Lucy Nickel in 2002, the clinic now has five aboriginal and one nonaboriginal doctors on staff and sees a high volume of aboriginal patients.

It's the only clinic Nickel knows of that's staffed predominantly by aboriginal doctors. It doesn't advertise because it doesn't need to. Word of mouth referrals have given the doctors there more business than they can handle.

"I had idealistic goals of helping aboriginal people," said Nickel, a member of Star Blanket First Nation. "I always wanted to have a place where people would feel welcome and treated as equals and you don't have to deal with the racism."

Nickel, like Mirasty, said she was never treated by an aboriginal doctor growing up.

"I grew up on the reserve and never, ever; like everybody else, you have white, older, male doctors," she said. "I never thought I could ever be a doctor when I was young. I never had any role models who were physicians."

Nickel is now playing that part for many of her patients. Among them is Linklater's 11-year-old daughter, Qwaleigha, who is in awe of Nickel and wants to be a doctor like her one day.

"My kids just love having a First Nation role model to look up to," Linklater said. "They can't believe it; our people can succeed so much with our past history, with everything that is going on with the racism and intergenerational issues like residential schools."

Mirasty said one of the biggest barriers to aboriginal people pursuing a medical doctoral degree is the lack of good teachers on aboriginal reserves and in northern Saskatchewan, where 80 per cent of the population is aboriginal.

"A lot of students in those areas, they kind of don't get the level of education from the more experienced teachers, especially the ones that are specialized in math and science," she said.

This means many students from reserves struggle with taking university science courses, which are required for people to apply to medical school.

Dr. Veronica McKinney, an aboriginal physician and director of Saskatchewan's northern medical services, added that medical school can be a shock for aboriginal students.

"It's very challenging to go through, especially if you're more culturally attuned," she said. "In medical school you're expected to just snap with answers and just speak very loudly.

"I found that really hard," she adds. "I had to actually learn how to do that because culturally, that's not what we do. We're supposed to think about our answer and sit back a little bit and that's not really accepted."

Part of McKinney's job now involves co-ordinating physician appointments in northern Saskatchewan. She said there are no self-identifying aboriginal doctors working north of Prince Albert where the need for them is greatest.

"Most of our First Nation reserves, I think, get really left out of the whole health care system because of some of the difficulties of working on reserves," she said. "There's very little understanding from most doctors about aboriginal people and what the needs are. I think, in fact, there's a lot of judgments that are made and I understand that, why it happens, but it makes it really challenging for people to access care."

Even when people from the north or on reserves go to medical school, many don't want to go back to practice.

"It's not easy going back home," Nickel said. "In an idealistic world, we all would be working somewhere north on a reserve, but in reality we have spouses and other things and commitments."

Mirasty has high hopes of breaking that mould once she graduates by regularly flying up north to provide medical care to people in the remote northern communities she used to teach in.

"I'm strong with my belief system. I grew up with my aboriginal cultural ceremonies so, certain things for me - with sweet grass and sweat lodges and stuff - I value that as a form of helping somebody spiritually, mentally, emotionally," she said.

"With doctors ... it would be nice to have somebody who had the same background, who understands."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Aboriginal+doctors+demand/11188339/story.html>

Deaf Metis woman wins human rights case against UBC, St. Paul's Hospital

Tribunal awards lost wages and \$35,000 for loss of dignity and self-respect

By Brian Morton, Vancouver Sun July 8, 2015



Jessica Dunkley is the first deaf Metis doctor in Canada.

A B.C. Human Rights Tribunal has awarded a deaf Métis woman lost wages and \$35,000 for injury to her dignity and self-respect for not being provided with sign language interpreters during her University of B.C. medical residency.

“The discrimination entirely undermined her optimism, brilliance and efforts,” said tribunal member Marlene Tyshynski in a written decision released June 30.

“I find that the discrimination had a profound impact on (Dr. Jessica Dunkley), a person with so much to contribute on the brink of her professional career. She was plagued by

the uncertainty and fear that her dream of working as a doctor was coming to an end, and the dream of her Dad seeing his daughter succeed was gone. Indeed, she lost her residency.

“She felt dehumanized and devalued.”

Dunkley, who has been deaf since birth and graduated from the University of Ottawa medical school in May 2010, had filed a complaint against the University of B.C. and St. Paul’s Hospital in July 2010 that she not only wasn’t provided with interpreters for her required residency but that the university didn’t make a good-faith effort to accommodate her disability.

In October 2010, Dunkley was placed on paid leave and in January 2011, she was placed on unpaid leave.

On Feb. 2, 2011, UBC’s faculty of medicine wrote that “based on the projected costs of the interpreter services that Dr. Dunkley will require throughout her training we have concluded that the Office of Postgraduate Education is unable to provide the requested accommodation. We confirm that the Health Authority has also concluded that it does not have funds to support this request.

“In the absence of funding for these services Dr. Dunkley is unable to proceed in the program.”

After that, Dunkley filed an amendment to her complaint, alleging that UBC denied her a service customarily available to the public — that is, residency training — because of her disability.

In its decision released June 30, the tribunal concluded that Dunkley was indeed the victim of discrimination, noting that she is one of the first deaf doctors in Canada, the first Métis deaf doctor, and a winner of the “Extraordinary Woman” award at the University of Ottawa.

“She had been matched with her residency of choice, a five-year residency in dermatology at UBC.

“She was a role model for the National Aboriginal Health Organization.”

Besides ordering the respondents to pay Dunkley’s wage loss from Jan. 20, 2011 to Sept. 6, 2011, \$35,000 for injury to her dignity, feelings and self-respect, and \$500 to attend the Dermatology Conference in New Orleans, the tribunal ordered that Dunkley be reinstated in UBC’s dermatology residency program. However, Dunkley began the Public Health and Preventive Medicine residency program at the University of Alberta in January 2014.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Deaf+Metis+woman+wins+human+rights+case+against+Paul+Hospital/11198844/story.html>

Quadriplegic Cree man sues Alberta Health claiming abuse, discrimination

Gerald Francis developed deep pressure wounds that required emergency surgery and threatened his life

By Marion Warnica, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 09, 2015 6:30 AM MT Last Updated: Jul 09, 2015 11:12 AM MT



Florence Youngchief has been fighting for better care for her partner of 11 years. (CBC)

It was a long time before she found out where the smell was coming from. And when she did, she wished she could close her eyes forever.

Florence Youngchief visited her common-law husband every week at the Wetaskiwin hospital.

His spirits were often low. After a fall down the stairs two years ago, Gerald Francis lost all feeling in his arms and legs and could only shrug his shoulders and turn his head.

She noticed the smell after a few weeks. It was like poop, unclean. Nursing staff reassured her that he needed a diaper change and would have her leave the room.

Five months later, during an appointment at a different hospital, the doctor noticed it too. And when nurses stripped Francis down in front of his wife - she couldn't believe what she saw.

Huge pressure sores. Eight in total. One stretched up the right side of his body.

Youngchief could see his rib bones through the flesh. Other sores were on his buttocks, his heel, his arm, his thigh. Deep and oozing.

"That's where that smell was coming from. They were just yellow and green. Infections, like," she said.

"My husband was laying there asking, 'Honey, what's going on?'"

But all she could do was cry.

Serious allegations

The doctor who found the wounds ordered emergency surgery, writing "the outlook for the client is very dismal."

Francis's family reported his case to the provincial government's Protection for Persons in Care soon after.

Acting director Anita Sieben then signed off on an investigation that found evidence of abuse, defined as "an act or omission that results in failing to provide adequate nutrition, adequate medical attention, or another necessity of life without a valid consent, resulting in serious bodily harm."

Francis was admitted to the Wetaskiwin hospital in January 2014, where he was allowed to use a wheelchair that didn't properly fit him for four months.



Gerald Francis listens to music with his common law partner Florence Youngchief. (CBC)

By February, he had developed eight pressure wounds. The wound on his buttocks was continually contaminated by fecal matter.

Staff at the hospital had a meeting on February 27, 2014, about what to do next. But neither Francis nor Youngchief attended. And there was no evidence they were invited.

In April, his nursing team at the Wetaskiwin hospital told investigators, they came up with a schedule to turn him at night.

27 months and no wheelchair

Francis requires two wheelchairs. But more than two years after his accident, he has none.

He is a Treaty 6 member, which makes him ineligible to apply to the provincial government for funding for a wheelchair.

But he could potentially get funding through the federal government's non-insured health benefit for First Nations and Inuit. And applying for that funding was exactly what Sieben's report recommended.

"The parties involved all need to know what equipment is required and how to access and fund the client's equipment requirements," she wrote in her letter last December.

But Youngchief said there has been no action. Francis is currently admitted to the University of Alberta Hospital, awaiting a long-term placement.

"I just want a better change," she said. "I just want my husband to be treated like any other person."

Francis has now filed a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against the provincial health system, naming as defendants Health Minister Sarah Hoffman, several doctors and hospitals and the office of Protection for Persons in Care.

Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health say they cannot comment due to privacy and legal concerns.

'Deplorable, unnecessary and tragic'

"Our health care system is such that people don't have the knowledge, time or experience to provide the care that's needed to prevent those types of things from occurring," said Guy Coulombe, the manager of programs and services with Spinal Cord Injury Alberta.

"It's tragic. It's preventable. It's unnecessary. And it's our health-care system not providing the basic needs."

He said health-care workers don't have enough knowledge of the severity of pressure sores and the ongoing problems they can lead to - even death.

"If you don't catch the skin when it gets red, it can take months to heal. And that's at huge cost to the health-care system," he said.

In his 30 years with the organization, he has seen 80 to 90 people with spinal cord injuries die due to infections from pressure sores.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/quadruplegic-cree-man-sues-alberta-health-claiming-abuse-discrimination-1.3144243>

Aboriginal History

Wasaga homeowner honours First Nations chief of War of 1812



Award-winning carver Scott Rowe of Cookstown puts the finishing touches to Assiginack. Ian Adams Photo

By [Ian Adams](#), Jul 03, 2015

A lesser-known figure of the War of 1812 is being immortalized on Shore Lane.

Dan Penner and his wife, Lorraine Smith, had grown tired of the Chinese elm at the front of their property.

“It was so dirty, and all the buds were falling on my neighbour’s garage – it was terrible,” Penner said.

But instead of having it lopped right to the ground, the couple left a 12-foot tall stump and brought in award-winning carver Scott Rowe to turn it into a sculpture of the First Nations chief Assiginack.

“I’m a project-type of a guy ... [and] I really wanted to do a tree sculpture,” Penner said.

The couple came across Assiginack while touring Nancy Island Historic Site.

Jean-Baptiste Assiginack was chief of an Ottawa band, and is believed to have taken part in the British capture of Michilimackinac early in the War of 1812. After the Aug. 13, 1814 sinking of the Nancy, Assiginack and about 300 Ojibwa joined a party of British soldiers led by Lt. Miller Worsley to capture two of the American ships involved in the battle, the Tigress and the Scorpion.

It’s said that Assiginack was the first on board the Tigress.

“I was intrigued by Assiginack,” Penner said. “I did all kinds of research on this gentleman, and he was a brave man.

“It was something we wanted to do as a tribute,” he said. “If you think about it, if [Assiginack] wasn’t here with the [Ojibwa] to fight with the British, this would be U.S. property.”

Smith has developed the wording for a sign that will be placed near the sculpture to explain it.

“I felt something here, that [the First Nations] had not been recognized,” for their role in the War of 1812, Penner said. “We saw a picture of this First Nations chief, and thought, ‘what a fabulous character.’”

He saw Rowe’s work while driving past his shop, The Country Saw, south of Barrie, and decided to hire him to undertake the work.

Rowe, who has been carving professionally for about eight years, says it will take approximately 30 hours to complete Assiginack, including applying a layer of varnish.

That doesn’t include the time to carve a wolf, which will be done in pine, and placed next to the sculpture of the First Nations chief. The sculpture of Assiginack is also holding a falcon.

Rowe said most carvers prefer white pine to work in, as it’s a softer wood. He noted elm is a particularly hard wood to use.

“It’s extremely heavy and extremely hard,” he said. “It was Dan and Lorraine’s ideas, and I just took it to the next step. It’s been a beautiful piece of wood to work on.”

Direct Link: <http://www.simcoe.com/news-story/5706152-wasaga-homeowner-honours-first-nations-chief-of-war-of-1812/>

Activists say Oka Crisis sparked important First Nations movements



A Mohawk Warrior sits in golf cart and uses binoculars to view approaching Canadian army armoured vehicles on Highway 344 on the Kanesatake Reserve at Oka, Que., September 1, 1990. (Tom Hanson / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Giuseppe Valiante and Peter Rakobowchuk, The Canadian Press
Published Tuesday, July 7, 2015 8:53AM EDT

OKA, Que. -- It was a crisis that grabbed international headlines, with armed Mohawks and Canadian soldiers involved in a lengthy standoff that often appeared on the verge of exploding into full-blown combat.

Twenty-five years on, the legacy of the Oka Crisis for many of those who experienced the tension west of Montreal is a greater awareness of native issues.

Native activists, artists and professors say while it's difficult to draw direct links, the Oka uprising in 1990 inspired First Nations movements across the country such as the Idle No More protests in 2012 and the ever-increasing calls for a federal inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.



A Mohawk native winds up to punch a soldier during a fight that took place on the Kahnawake reserve on Montreal's south shore, Tuesday, Sept. 18, 1990. (Tom Hanson / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

University of Ottawa professor Marcelo Saavedra-Vargas, who specializes in the studies of indigenous peoples, called the Oka Crisis "an awakening" heard around the world.

"I can tell you -- from my own experience -- that the indigenous social movements in Bolivia, which ended up bringing an indigenous person to the presidency, were also inspired by the Oka events," he said in an interview.

Saavedra-Vargas added that at powwows and other celebrations around the continent, "you can always meet Mohawk Warriors talking about how they are proud of what happened. They keep the memory alive."

When the town of Oka decided in 1990 it was going to allow the expansion of a golf course on disputed territory -- including on a Mohawk burial ground -- people living in the neighbouring Mohawk community of Kanesatake rose up in defiance.

In response to the council's decision, Mohawks barricaded a dirt road leading to the golf course.

After they refused to obey a court injunction to stand down, a shootout ensued with provincial police officers and resulted in the death of Cpl. Marcel Lemay on July 11.

Where the bullet came from remains a mystery.

The Quebec government called in the Canadian Forces and roughly 800 members of the Royal 22e Regiment encircled the Mohawks in the pines with barbed wire.

"(Premier Robert Bourassa) called us into his office the day after (the shooting) and told us -- he made it clear, he didn't want any more death," Sam Elkas, who was Quebec public security minister at the time, said in an interview.

After 78 days of negotiations, both sides struck a deal: the barricades made of dirt and mangled police vehicles were to come down in return for the cancellation of the golf course expansion.

The disputed territory remains an unsettled issue, however, and was never officially ceded by the Mohawks or handed over to the native community by federal or provincial governments.

"You reach a point after a while where you have to make a stand," Kanesatake resident Linda Simon, who experienced the violence, said in an interview.

"The common lands had slowly been given away and sold and there came a point where people weren't going to take it anymore."

The 1990 events led to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples, which helped usher in new agreements between natives and non-natives such as the resource-sharing deal in

2002 called the Paix des Braves (Peace of the Braves) between the Quebec government and the Grand Council of the Crees.

Alanis Obomsawin, an award-winning filmmaker who made a much-praised documentary about the conflict called "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance," said the events of 1990 inspired native people across the country and raised awareness among Canadians regarding land claims.

"When I go out West, (aboriginal) people tell me, 'Alanis, we could never thank the Mohawks enough for what they did.'"

Back home, Quebec Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley said provincial and federal governments have appreciated since Oka that First Nations groups need to be consulted when development projects affect their territory.

"Back then I think we would have acted more unilaterally," he said.

Kelley mentioned provincial funding for the Kateri Memorial hospital on the Kahnawake reserve south of Montreal -- which he said required several bureaucratic hurdles to overcome such as modifications to labour laws -- as an example of a change in government attitude toward native people.

"It's a small example but a good one to show how we are adapting our institutions with native realities and I think they will bring great benefits in the future," he said.

But while native people have received more respect from non-native governments since Oka, there are many outstanding land claims across the country, and some Canadians still harbour prejudices against Aboriginal Peoples, Kelley said.

Tom Siddon, federal minister of Indian affairs and northern development at the time under Brian Mulroney, said he believes Oka played a key role in improving the thorny issue of land claims.

"I think we were able to make some major progress and I do believe that Oka was an important turning point in our natural history," he said in an interview.

The current grand chief in Kanesatake says that while the Mohawk Warriors might have inspired people around the world, the aftermath of the crisis led to the "social disintegration of the community."

Serge Simon said it has taken a generation for people to overcome the trauma of the crisis and band council politics have only recently started to calm down after years of tension and sometimes violence between community members.

Simon said the 25th anniversary of the crisis has forced difficult memories to the surface including what he called human-rights abuses he alleges his people suffered at the hands of the provincial police.

"(The provincial police) took my cousin Angus Jacob and brought him to the back of a barn and handcuffed him to a metal chair," he said in an interview.

"They pulled his pants down and they started electrocuting his testicles to get him to talk."

He said events like Oka can happen again in Canada but it's critical that natives and non-natives continue to talk to one another.

"Oka is what happens when dialogue stops," he said.

Direct Link: <http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/activists-say-oka-crisis-sparked-important-first-nations-movements-1.2457267>

Oka Crisis deepened understanding of land claims in Canada

25th anniversary dredges up difficult memories for those involved

By Giuseppe Valiante and Peter Rakobowchuk, The Canadian Press Posted: Jul 07, 2015
6:48 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 07, 2015 8:31 PM ET



Mohawk Warrior known as Noreiga clutches a Mohawk woman as he is taken into custody Sept. 26, 1990 by Canadian soldiers during the surrender at the Kanasehtake Reserve at Oka. It was a crisis that grabbed international headlines, with armed Mohawks and Canadian soldiers involved in a lengthy standoff that often appeared on the verge of exploding into full-blown combat. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Bill Grimshaw)

It was a crisis that grabbed international headlines, with Mohawks and Canadian soldiers involved in a lengthy stand-off that often appeared on the verge of exploding into full-blown combat.

Twenty-five years on, the legacy of the Oka Crisis for many of those who experienced the tension west of Montreal is a greater awareness of indigenous issues.

In 1990, when the town of Oka decided it was going to allow the expansion of a golf course on disputed territory—including on a Mohawk burial ground—people living in the neighbouring Mohawk community of Kanesatake rose up in defence of what they said was their land.

In response to the council's decision, Mohawks barricaded a dirt road leading to the golf course.

After they refused to obey a court injunction to stand down, a shoot out ensued with provincial police officers and resulted in the death of Cpl. Marcel Lemay on July 11.

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Army called in

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After 78 days of negotiations, both sides struck a deal: the barricades made of dirt and mangled police vehicles were to come down in return for the cancellation of the golf course expansion.

The disputed territory remains an unsettled issue, however, and was never officially ceded by the Mohawks or handed over to the Kanesatake by federal or provincial governments.

"You reach a point after a while where you have to make a stand," Kanesatake resident Linda Simon, who experienced the violence, said in an interview.

"The common lands had slowly been given away and sold and there came a point where people weren't going to take it anymore."

Legacy of the crisis

The 1990 events led to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples, which helped usher in new agreements between indigenous and non-indigenous people such as the resource-sharing deal in 2002 called the Paix des Braves (Peace of the Braves) between the Quebec government and the Grand Council of the Crees.



Filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin is seen in her office at the National Film Board of Canada, Thursday, July 2, 2015 in Montreal. Twenty-five years after her team shot the documentary, "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of

Resistance," filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin describes how Warriors behind the barricades thought there was going to be a massacre. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ryan Remiorz)

Alanis Obomsawin, an award-winning filmmaker who made a much-praised documentary about the conflict called "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance," said the events of 1990 inspired indigenous people across the country and raised awareness among Canadians regarding land claims.

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But while indigenous people have received more respect from non-indigenous governments since Oka, there are many outstanding land claims across the country, and some Canadians still harbour prejudices against Aboriginal Peoples, Kelley said.

Difficult memories

Tom Siddon, federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at the time under Brian Mulroney, said he believes Oka played a key role in improving the thorny issue of land claims.

"I think we were able to make some major progress and I do believe that Oka was an important turning point in our natural history," he said in an interview.

The current grand chief in Kanesatake says that while the Mohawk Warriors might have inspired people around the world, the aftermath of the crisis led to the "social disintegration of the community."

"Oka is what happens when dialogue stops." - Serge Simon, grand chief of Kanesatake

Serge Simon said it has taken a generation for people to overcome the trauma of the crisis and band council politics have only recently started to calm down after years of tension and sometimes violence between community members.

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Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/oka-crisis-deepened-understanding-of-land-claims-in-canada-1.3142239>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

A celebration you say?

Does July 9 really stand for something worth celebrating?

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, July 08, 2015 - 3:50 pm

This July 9, most Nunavut residents will mark the arrival of yet another Nunavut Day. Who knows? Some people might actually want to celebrate it.

It's a great time to mingle with old friends and relatives and bond with your neighbours. In Iqaluit, the crowds will likely gather near the territory's most expensive smoke-break station to pretend they're interested in the eye-glazing speeches while they wait to enjoy the free food and the free music.

But does July 9 really stand for something worth celebrating?

Sixteen years after the creation of the new territory, the answer is no. On the territorial issues that matter — health care, education, justice and municipal affairs — its failures are worse than even the new territory's strongest detractors could have predicted prior to April 1, 1999.

And Nunavut's most vulnerable people continue to pay the price.

Take health care, for example. The sad and unnecessary death of Baby Makibi in Cape Dorset in April 2012 was bad enough.

But its sordid aftermath — credible allegations pointing to the harassment of whistle-blowers, the protection of incompetents, and contradictory and possibly self-serving information given to the family — exemplifies everything that is toxic and third-rate about the quality of public services in Nunavut.

The Cape Dorset scandal has produced allegations that suggest that for far too many Government of Nunavut officials, the preservation of career takes precedence over the wellbeing of the population.

In a functional society, this baby's family, and the public, would see their questions answered within a public and transparent truth-telling process. That means either a public inquest or a civil trial, in which documents could be subpoenaed and witnesses could be compelled to state under oath what they know.

Instead, we have a review done by an external investigator who does not have the power to compel evidence from anyone. Katherine Peterson is a respected, experienced lawyer with a solid track record. There is no reason to doubt she will approach her work with anything other than good faith and competence.

But given the emergence of two conflicting pathologist's reports, even the cause of the baby's death is now in dispute. With all due respect to Peterson, the resolution of these and other disputed facts cries out for a truth-seeking exercise with legal teeth. So it's conceivable that, despite her best efforts, the clouds of suspicion that hang over this case may never be lifted.

Let's not forget this: the Inuit of Nunavut surrendered their aboriginal title in exchange for a promise to create the government that is responsible for this mess.

This case reminds us, however, that it is now Inuit who usually suffer most from that government's dysfunction.

In 2011, two other Nunavut babies died in Igloolik in questionable circumstances. Despite the best efforts of their MLA, there was no inquiry and no credible explanation for why they were not medevaced to a hospital.

Nunavut residents everywhere complain about shoddy treatment at the hands of the health care system. That includes numerous cases of cancers that health workers fail to recognize. And yet individual patients continue to shoulder the blame.

At the same time, when individual Inuit are pushed around by their government, there is no group, service or organization in Nunavut that seems willing or able to advocate on their behalf.

Organizations like Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the regional associations are quick to defend their institutional interests. But when individual Inuit need an advocate, these well-funded organizations usually aren't there for them.

The key to achieving power, for individuals and collectivities alike, is education. Numerous political leaders, including those within the current government, never grow weary of repeating that truism. But Nunavut's school system fails more people than it helps. Until that changes, the school system must be regarded as a barrier and not a gateway to a better life.

Nunavut's only success is the creation of a space in which Inuit identity can be asserted with confidence. That's not a trivial accomplishment. But inside that space, nothing else works the way they promised it would. **JB**

Direct Link: http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674a_celebration_you_say/

AFN asks Ottawa to declare all aboriginal languages official

GLORIA GALLOWAY

MONTREAL — The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, Jul. 08, 2015 7:57PM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Jul. 08, 2015 11:49PM EDT

The head of the Assembly of First Nations is calling for the nearly 60 indigenous languages spoken in Canada to be declared official along with English and French, an expensive proposition but one that he says is becoming more urgent as the mother tongues of aboriginal peoples disappear.

Perry Bellegarde, who was elected National Chief of the AFN last fall, agrees it would not be easy to require translations of all indigenous languages to be printed on the sides of cereal boxes and milk cartons.

“That would be the ultimate goal,” Mr. Bellegarde said in an interview on Wednesday at the three-day annual general meeting of the AFN, Canada’s largest indigenous organization. “But let’s do small steps to get there.”

As a start, he said, the federal government should draft legislation that would set aside the financial resources needed to promote, protect and enhance Canada’s aboriginal languages, some of which are now spoken by only a handful of elders and could be gone in five to seven years.

During a session on aboriginal language preservation at the AFN meeting, chiefs and other delegates debated a resolution calling on the federal government to provide money that would begin the work of revitalization. Without putting a dollar figure on it, they agreed it would be costly.

The federal funds should be used for things such as an indigenous language institute, language programs and immersion at aboriginal schools, Mr. Bellegarde said, adding that he has raised the issue with all federal leaders as they prepare for an election in the fall.

“Because of the residential schools, there has basically been a killing of the languages in Canada, and our languages should be looked upon as national jewels, national treasures,” Mr. Bellegarde said. “There’s nowhere else in the world that you will hear Mohawk or Cree or Dene being spoken.”

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which spent seven years examining the legacy of the schools, released an interim report last month that recommended the creation of an aboriginal languages act to make the federal government financially responsible for preservation.

The TRC also recommended that postsecondary institutions create degree and diploma programs in the languages of the First Nations, the Métis and the Inuit. And that is starting to happen.

This fall, the University of Saskatchewan will offer its first certification for teachers of Cree and will eventually branch out to other indigenous languages. Michelle Prytula, the dean of the university’s college of education, said she was moved by the words of an elder who said the residential schools were responsible for the assault on indigenous languages but that schools also have the power to revitalize them.

The 2011 census found more than 60 aboriginal languages grouped into 12 distinct families. The most common are the Algonquin languages, which include Cree, Ojibwa, Mi’kmaq and Innu. At the current levels of funding, Mr. Bellegarde said, studies have shown that just three languages have a chance of surviving. “That’s a travesty.”

First nations elders say language explains the way their people view the world. For instance, in Mohawk, the word for mother is the same as the word for a mother's sisters, because parenting is done by the collective.

And the Cree word for school – kiskinwahamatowikamik – means “a place we go to cry.”

Marie Wilson, one of the TRC commissioners, said she heard over and over again that the loss of language was one of the most devastating results of the residential school system. One of the former students of the schools, she told the chiefs, said “they took my language, they took it right out of my mouth, I never spoke it again.”

Language is the key to culture and identity, Ms. Wilson said. “We live in a country that understands that perfectly well.”

It is part of what is required for self-determination, Mr. Bellegarde said. And to have aboriginal languages on the verge of extinction, he said, “is not acceptable and it's not right.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/afn-asks-ottawa-to-declare-all-aboriginal-languages-official/article25378218/>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

Former Native Women's Association president living in a tent outside Edmonton

[National News](#) | July 7, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#)



(Former NWAC President Marilyn Buffalo at the door of her home in Edmonton. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN)

Brandi Morin

APTN National News

EDMONTON — Marilyn Buffalo never thought she would be homeless at age 65. The former Native Women's Association of Canada president is now sleeping in a tent in Maskwacis after losing her rental home in Edmonton last week.

The home was expropriated to make way for the Valley Line LRT expansion on the city's south side.

Buffalo lived in her 3,300 square foot home for six years along with her four children, one of their spouses and two grandchildren.

Last August she first received notice of the expropriation, however she thought she would have plenty of time before she had to leave. Then in January she received a registered letter that said she had to leave by the end of March.

"I said, 'No, I'm not leaving,'" said Buffalo. "I didn't want to uproot my family in the middle of winter."

At that point city officials along with her landlord gave her till the end of June to find new accommodations. It still wasn't enough time. Although Buffalo is self-employed she didn't have the resources to acquire a new home.

Buffalo has been a single mother for 35 years and practices the traditional family setting of living under the same household with some of her now adult children and their families.

"This is the home that they know they can come to. It's a big loss for everybody. Because now we don't have a place to gather," she said.

She was forced to pack up all of her belongings and put them into storage while under added stress from family members getting seriously ill and one committed suicide in the last few months.

Her one son, wife and their children were able to recently find a small home to rent, but everyone else that lived in the home has been displaced, including her 45 year old daughter Rhonda Buffalo. Rhonda has been a student for the past year and will be sleeping alongside her mother in a tent until she finds work again. She struggled with depression and anxiety over the past few months but said her main concern was staying strong for her children.

“It feels scary and empty,” said Rhonda. “But we just keep going. We’re trying to take it one day at a time.”

Buffalo said she understands they aren’t the only Albertans facing homelessness and that she wants to share her story to shed light on the issue.

“Somewhere there’s a human dignity for individuals like myself, but no one offered us an olive branch of any kind,” she said.

She did attempt to enter into negotiations with city officials in the hopes they could help with moving costs. After three meetings the discussions turned sour.

But later on, a small settlement agreement was reached that cannot be disclosed for legal purposes, but Buffalo said it hardly made a difference.

“The fact is it clearly put me out on the streets. We have no place that we can go and advocate.”

Buffalo has had an extensive career. In addition to her work at the Native Women’s Association, she established the native studies program at the University of Alberta, she was a policy advisor to several levels of government and is also a residential school survivor. She attended the final Truth and Reconciliation event in Ottawa last month and said it was painful to hear Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson speaking to reconciliation when issues such as homelessness are so rampant in the city and seemingly ignored.

“It brought tears to my eyes...How do you reconcile healing and wellness and reconciliation for our people when thousands of us are being impacted by these laws that don’t protect anybody except the powers at be?”

Renters have few rights in Alberta when it comes to expropriation, however Buffalo said she is an descendant of the original First Nations that lived in the area long before the city was established, the city sits on “Indian land” and that it should make more efforts to address Aboriginal homelessness.

A 2012 study conducted by Homeward Trust found that out of 2,174 homeless people surveyed in Edmonton, 46 per cent of them were Aboriginal.

“100 years later we’re facing the same expropriation that my ancestors have faced,” she said, adding that if Edmonton is serious about reconciliation efforts it’s going to take a lot more than signing protocol and “feel good” agreements with area chiefs. That governments need to look at amending laws and legislation to accommodate Indigenous people living in cities.

She believes the lack of supports and resources for urban Aboriginal people contributes to other issues.

“This speaks to poverty, child welfare and missing and murdered Indigenous women. If you’re a homeless person and a mother and you have no means of putting food on the table or don’t have shelter- the root cause is poverty. You’re children get taken away. People give up. A lot of our people, especially women are falling through the cracks.”

Brad Smid, project manager for the Valley Line LRT called the situation unfortunate.



Marilyn Buffalo (right) with her daughter Rhonda. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN

“We obviously don’t want to see that happen to anyone affected by the project. We are definitely committed to fair treatment of all parties to the process. We try to give a lot of lead time and communication in advance for them to find alternative housing, to understand the expropriation process and their rights.”

Buffalo said she is living proof that homelessness can happen to anyone. Nevertheless she will continue to search for a suitable place to live. She refuses to stay on “skid row” or in accommodations that are run down and in some cases crawling with bed bugs and other pests currently available for rent in Edmonton.

Buffalo is travelling to Montreal this week to attend the Assembly of First Nations annual general assembly. She has also been nominated to once again serve as president of the Native Women’s Association. Friday, she will learn if she is voted into that position where she says if elected she will continue to be an advocate for Indigenous women.

By sharing this experience of now being homeless she hopes it will make a difference for others in the same boat.

“I am not alone. We need leadership with a heart to implement change in policies. I recently spoke to graduates at the 40th Anniversary of the Natives Students Association

at the UofA... In the back of my mind I was thinking, 'If only they knew where I am.' I told them 'you can't give up'."

Direct Link: http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/07/former-native-womens-association-president-living-tent-outside-edmonton/?utm_content=buffer5bfe4&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Aboriginal Politics

Winnipeg's first indigenous mayor faces high expectations and skeptics

Hamilton Spectator

By [Chinta Puxley](#), Jul 03, 2015

WINNIPEG — Brian Bowman had barely unpacked his sports memorabilia and family photos in the mayor's office when he was thrust into the national spotlight.

It wasn't for being the first indigenous mayor of a major Canadian city or for being one of the younger municipal leaders in the country.

Winnipeg had just been called "the most racist city in Canada" on the cover of Maclean's magazine.

The new mayor was faced with a dilemma — defend his hometown or admit it has a problem.

Within a few short hours in January, Bowman collected dozens of community, business and aboriginal leaders to stand behind him as he fought off his emotions and promised to fight racism.

"I knew when I was running for office that these were some of the challenges that we would have to face," Bowman says now. "I want all Winnipeggers to be proud of who they are."

Bowman, 43, is part of a cohort of hip, western big-city mayors — including Naheed Nenshi of Calgary — who have risen to power on plans to rid the cobwebs from city hall and remake the level of government that is closest to the people.

"I think there has been a wave from the West in Canada," he says. "There's a number of mayors that have brought in what I call new-generation leadership. It's really looking at a new way of thinking — long-term, more pragmatic, open and accessible and a little bit more technology literate."

As a lawyer with a background in privacy law and social media, Bowman has hired a social media director and has started live-streaming city hall meetings and news conferences. When a boil-water advisory turned off taps across Winnipeg for two days earlier this year, the announcement that it had ended came first on YouTube and Twitter.

"I use it to listen, first and foremost and I also use it to be open and accessible to Winnipeggers," Bowman says of his fondness for social media.

He was low in the polls when the mayoral campaign began last year, looking like a long-shot to beat front-runner Judy Wasylycia-Leis, a former MP. But he swept to power in a sea of selfies and promises to make the inner workings of city hall transparent again.

The fact that he was Canada's first indigenous mayor came as a surprise to many, since he never emphasized his Métis ancestry during the campaign.

His honeymoon period was relatively short. The racist city story was followed by the boil-water advisory, when E.coli was found during routine testing. Further investigation suggested results were false positives.

Bowman ran afoul of businessman Mark Chipman — a man admired by many for bringing the Winnipeg Jets NHL team back to the city — when he implied that some of Chipman's business development dealings with city hall were shady and "not cool."

While Bowman announced a mayor's indigenous advisory circle after the Maclean's article, it took five months to appoint its members.

Many are expecting more from him.

Leslie Spillitt, executive director of aboriginal organization Ka Ni Kanichihk, says it's not enough to just be an indigenous mayor or have an advisory council.

"If he's got appointments to make in terms of community affairs, I would think he ought to be considering indigenous people," she says. "Indigenous people are always seen as a problem to be solved. That's a paradigm that needs to be shifted."

Winnipeg doesn't even have a centre that celebrates aboriginal culture, she added. The only real aboriginal marker — a sacred aboriginal spot where two rivers meet in the heart of Winnipeg — is a memorial to missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Royce Koop, chair of the political science department at the University of Manitoba, says mayors like Bowman may be early adopters of the latest social media app, but that doesn't make them innovative thinkers. The real proof of that comes in their policies.

So far, he says, the new wave of western mayors seem to be as reliant as ever on old-style policies — falling back on user fees and parking tickets as a revenue source. They're just marketing them differently.

"Every politician, young or old, comes along and says they're going to do things differently," Koop says. "It's about what people do with power once they have it, not how they communicate what they've done."

Bowman says he's committed to making long-term changes that help make Winnipeg a more inclusive place.

"I'm not going to solve them alone," he says.

"We're never going to solve racism entirely, but we're going to work really hard to make a difference."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5708595-winnipeg-s-first-indigenous-mayor-faces-high-expectations-and-skeptics/>

Indian Act versus band custom elections

By Kerry Benjoe, Leader-Post July 3, 2015



First Nations around Canada have a few options open to them when it comes to selecting their leadership and each comes with its own unique set of problems.

REGINA — First Nations around Canada have a few options open to them when it comes to selecting their leadership and each comes with its own unique set of problems.

According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC), First Nations can choose to operate their elections under the Indian Act, a custom system, or under the provisions of a self-governing agreement.

Under the Indian Act, all First Nations that choose this method are subject to the same rules and eligibility requirements and elections are held every two years.

AANDC is involved throughout the entire process from approving the electoral officer, training and supporting the officers to ensure elections rules are followed to appointing an election officer when there is no First Nation council in place.

It also deals with all appeals, which must be filed 45 days after the election. The RCMP can be called in to conduct an investigation if AANDC deems it necessary.

Reasons for an appeal can include corrupt practices, violation of the election regulations or an ineligible candidate.

In a band custom election, the community creates its own set of rules and regulations including the length of each term.

Unlike an Indian Act election, AANDC has no involvement with the election and subsequent disputes.

The only option these First Nations have when it comes to resolving disputes is through the courts.

Cowessess First Nation is no stranger to the pitfalls when it comes to enforcing its own election act.

Soon after its 2013 election, some of the membership contested the election.

Terry W. Lavallee was elected chief, but according to the Cowessess Election Act he had up to 90 days to find a permanent residence on reserve, which he had not done by the deadline.

A court battle ensued and that same year Lavallee was in a federal courtroom.

It took nearly a year before a federal court judge ruled to uphold the Cowessess Election Act.

Although there is currently no chief listed on the AANDC website, Lavallee has not stepped down and a byelection has not been held.

There have been community protests, sit ins, blockades, but there has been no change in the leadership.

Lavallee has eight months left of his three-year term.

Most recently, the Supreme Court of Canada weighed in on an election act dispute on the Kahkewistahaw First Nation.

Chief Louis Taypotat a residential school survivor has a Grade 10 education, but according to Kahkewistahaw's election act those seeking political office must have a minimum Grade 12 education.

On May 28, after receiving the news of the ruling Taypotat said he had no plans of stepping aside.

At that time, he said he may look to pursue his GED. On Friday, he said he will step down when his term is done and let the "young ones" see what they can do.

"It's not an easy job," said Taypotat. "It's a demanding position."

His immediate plan was to continue working for the community and hoped everyone could just work together.

"Different people have different views of different things," said Taypotat. "It's always been like that."

In April, AANDC introduced a fourth option when it created the First Nations Election Act.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/Indian+versus+band+custom+elections/11186944/story.html>

Ottawa poised to defend rights record on aboriginals, terrorism at UN committee



Prime Minister Stephen Harper addresses the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York on September 25, 2014. (Sean Kilpatrick / The Canadian Press)

Mike Blanchfield, The Canadian Press

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OTTAWA -- The Canadian Human Rights Commission has told a United Nations panel that the plight of Canada's aboriginal people is one of the country's most urgent civil rights issues.

The commission made that submission to the UN Human Rights Committee, which opened its review of Canada's compliance to the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights on Monday.

There was broad criticism of the Harper government's policies on murdered or missing aboriginal women as well as Canada's approach to terrorism, including the recent passage of the anti-terrorism act.

It's the first time Canada has been examined by the panel since 2005, which makes this the first such examination of the Conservatives' rights record.

The Conservatives are no fans of UN oversight mechanisms, and have had some high-profile clashes with special rapporteurs on issues including relating to torture and aboriginal women.

The government will formally respond Tuesday to a variety of complaints at what is a regularly scheduled examination of Canada's record.

The review is taking place 100 days before the federal election, and could provide fodder for the government's domestic political opponents.

In its submission, the Canadian Human Rights Commission says the plight of aboriginal people is "one of the most pressing human rights issues facing Canada today."

It said that aboriginal people "continue to be significantly disadvantaged in terms of education, employment and access to basic needs such as water, food and housing."

The commission also said aboriginal women do not get equal access to justice in Canada.

"Indigenous women, in particular, bear a disproportionate burden of violence."

Similarly, the New York-based Human Rights Watch reiterated the findings of its 2013 report that criticized the RCMP for failing to protect aboriginal women in northern British Columbia.

The Canadian church-based group Kairos, which has had its funding cut by the Conservatives, asks the committee to "recommend changes in its policies and practices that would require Canada to take seriously its responsibilities to Indigenous peoples."

The federal government has rejected calls for a federal inquiry into the violence against aboriginal women, saying it supports provincial efforts in that regard.

Several groups also took aim at the government's recently enacted terrorism law, with Amnesty International calling on the committee to recommend that it be repealed because it does not impose adequate oversight on Canada's spy agency.

Amnesty also notes that the government still hasn't responded to the committee's 2005 recommendation for redress to three Canadian citizens -- Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad Abou-Elmaati and Muayyed Nureddin -- who were tortured in Syrian prisons.

And it wants the committee to urge similar redress to Omar Khadr after the Supreme Court of Canada's finding that Canadian officials violated his rights while he was in the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"Whenever human rights have been violated, it threatens peace and security," said Sukanya Pillay, executive director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

"Things like fundamental justice, due process, equality, all of these things have been on really shaky ground in Canada in recent years," she added.

"We are concerned that certain new legislation, while it might have been well-intended, has serious repercussions for civil liberties, and is at odds with Canada's legal commitments."

About two dozen groups, including the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International and other civil society organizations were to give submissions to the committee on Monday and Tuesday.

Canadian diplomats in the Geneva, where the hearings are taking place, will present Canada's response starting on Tuesday. A Foreign Affairs spokeswoman said Monday that Canada is proud of its rights record, but did not elaborate on what diplomats would tell the committee.

The 18-member panel won't announce its findings for another two weeks. It is also examining the records of several other countries, including Britain, France, Spain, Macedonia and Uzbekistan.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-poised-to-defend-rights-record-on-aboriginals-terrorism-at-un-committee-1.2456522>

Chiefs urge aboriginal people to vote against Harper government

GLORIA GALLOWAY

MONTREAL — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Jul. 07, 2015 8:28AM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Jul. 08, 2015 12:03AM EDT

Chiefs across Canada are being urged to get their people into federal voting booths next fall with the aim of defeating the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The call on Tuesday at the annual meeting of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), adds another dynamic to an already tight three-way race and offers incentive to opposition leaders to target at least part of their campaigns at aboriginal people – a demographic that has largely been considered inconsequential to the outcome of elections.

“This is a matter of national importance, and there should be no greater effort put forward by us in the coming weeks and into the coming months,” Derek Nepinak, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, told the crowd of several hundred.

Every indigenous leader has a responsibility to return to their community and ensure their youth are registered to cast a ballot on Oct. 19, Mr. Nepinak said. He urged the chiefs to persuade their communities to vote for the candidate – Liberal or New Democrat – with the best chance of defeating a Conservative.

“We all have the ability to cast a ballot to effect change in Ottawa,” he said. “We can mitigate the damages by voting for a different government in this upcoming election.”

First Nations leaders say they have the numbers to affect the outcome in 51 ridings. Traditionally, turnout among aboriginal people lags well behind that of the general population. Elections Canada says 45 per cent of people on reserves voted in 2011, but the chiefs say the actual turnout was much lower.

Many First Nations people also believe casting a ballot in a national election undermines their sovereignty and tarnishes the ideal of a nation-to-nation relationship between their community and the government of Canada. That has undoubtedly contributed to low participation rates.

But First Nations leaders say several factors could propel their communities to the polls this year.

The first is a mistrust of the Conservative government that has been simmering for years and has intensified since the last election. Chiefs complain about matters such as a lack of money for on-reserve education, a frustrating process for settling land claims, the government’s refusal to call an inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women and Mr. Harper’s reluctance to meet face-to-face.

Groups have been created, including one called Rally The First Nation Vote, with the intent of ousting the Conservatives.

“We can work towards getting the Harper government out, and having a new government that is willing to work with First Nations people on indigenous issues,” Quinn Meawasige, a member of the AFN youth council, told the gathering.

The second factor is what some chiefs describe as a growing empowerment of young indigenous people who are angered by the disparities between their standard of living and that of the rest of Canada, and whose numbers are increasing faster than the rate of the general population.

And the third is the rapid expansion of social media.

“Look what happened with Idle No More,” Perry Bellegarde, the National Chief of the AFN, told The Globe and Mail. “Because of social media, people are starting to talk. Look at the excitement of the youth. They are the ones that are really going to drive this.”

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt says the Conservative government has introduced measures to improve the lives of aboriginal people, many of them aimed at positioning the First Nations to take full advantage of Canada’s economic prosperity. The Liberals and the New Democrats, he said, “favour irresponsible spending instead of concrete, achievable and necessary action.”

But native speakers at the three-day AFN meeting decried Conservative policies, from changes to the Canada Elections Act they say will make it more difficult for aboriginal people to vote, to reductions in environmental assessments, to anti-terrorism legislation that they say could affect their ability to engage in legitimate protest.

NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair and Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, who addressed the assembly, promised a new era of respect for indigenous people. Both committed to increased consultation, improved language rights, a national inquiry into the missing and murdered women, more money for education and to attend future meetings of the AFN.

Change is not only possible, it is absolutely necessary, said Mr. Mulcair.

“We will never impose solutions from the top down,” said Mr. Trudeau.

Unlike other chiefs, Mr. Bellegarde does not openly lobby for the defeat of the Conservatives saying the AFN must remain staunchly non-partisan. But he does urge greater First Nations electoral participation.

“The important thing is we want to make a difference,” he said. “And, if anybody wants to get elected into government now, we are saying our vote is going to count this time around. Pay attention to us.”

Chiefs across Canada are being urged to get their people into federal voting booths next fall with the aim of defeating the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The call, which came on Tuesday at the annual meeting of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), adds another dynamic to an already tight three-way race and offers an incentive to opposition leaders to target at least some of their campaign messages to aboriginal people – a demographic that has largely been considered inconsequential to the outcome of elections.

“This is a matter of national importance, and there should be no greater effort put forward by us in the coming weeks and into the coming months,” Derek Nepinak, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, told the crowd of several hundred.

Every chief has a responsibility to return to their community and ensure that their youth are registered to cast a ballot on Oct. 19, Mr. Nepinak said. He urged the chiefs to persuade their communities to vote strategically for the candidate – Liberal or New Democrat – who has the best chance of defeating a Conservative.

“We all have the ability to cast a ballot to effect change in Ottawa,” he said. “We can mitigate the damages by voting for a different government in this upcoming election.”

First Nations leaders say they have the numbers to affect the outcome in 51 ridings. Traditionally, the voter turnout among aboriginal people lags well behind that of the general population. Elections Canada says 45 per cent of people on reserves voted in the 2011 election, but even the chiefs say that is likely inflated and the actual turnout was much lower.

Many First Nations members believe casting a ballot in a national election undermines their own sovereignty and the ideal of a nation-to-nation relationship with the government of Canada. That has undoubtedly contributed to low participation rates.

But, this year, First Nations leaders say several factors could propel their communities to the polls.

The first is a simmering mistrust between the Conservative government and many indigenous people. The chiefs complain about matters as diverse as a lack of money for on-reserve education, a frustrating process for settling land claims, the government’s refusal to call an inquiry into the large numbers of murdered and missing aboriginal women, and Mr. Harper’s reluctance to meet face-to-face.

Groups have been created, including one called Rally The First Nation Vote, with the intent of ousting the Conservatives.

“We can work towards getting the Harper government out, and having a new government that is willing to work with First Nations people on indigenous issues,” Quinn Meawasige, a member of the AFN youth council told the gathering.

The second factor that could motivate the First Nations vote is what some chiefs describe as a growing empowerment among young First Nations people.

And the third is the rapid expansion of social media.

“Look what happened with Idle No More,” Perry Bellegarde, the National Chief of the AFN, said in an interview with The Globe and Mail. “Because of social media, people are starting to talk. Look at the excitement of the youth. They are the ones that are really going to drive this.”

Speaker after speaker took to the podium on opening day of the three-day meeting to decry Conservative policies, from changes to the Canada Elections Act they say will make it more difficult for aboriginal people to vote, to reductions in environmental assessments, to anti-terrorism legislation they say could affect their ability to engage in legitimate protest.

Those themes were echoed by NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair and Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, who were each given a half hour to make their pitch to the assembly. Both opposition leaders promised that the election of their party in the fall would usher in a new era of respect for Canada's indigenous people.

Both committed to increased consultation with native people, improved language rights, a national inquiry into the missing and murdered women, more money for education, and their own presence at future meetings of the AFN.

Change is not only possible, it is absolutely necessary, Mr. Mulcair said.

"We will never impose solutions from the top down," Mr. Trudeau said.

Unlike other chiefs, Mr. Bellegarde does not openly advocate for the defeat of the Conservatives, saying the AFN must remain non-partisan. But he is urging greater electoral participation.

"The important thing is we want to make a difference," he said. "And, if anybody wants to get elected into government now, we are saying our vote is going to count this time around. Pay attention to us."

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/trudeau-to-roll-out-plan-to-bolster-funding-for-aboriginal-education/article25334759/>

Assembly of First Nations chief calls for mass voter registration in hope of ousting Conservatives

[Christopher Curtis, Postmedia News](#) | July 7, 2015 10:34 PM ET



Assembly of First Nations national Chief Perry Bellegarde gives the keynote speech at the AFN's annual conference in Montreal on Tuesday, July 7, 2015.

From the lectern at Place Bonaventure, Ghislain Picard made a point of thanking the federal and provincial politicians who chose to sit among hundreds of Canada's First Nations chiefs gathered in Montreal.

He carefully singled them out, naming Romeo Saganash from the New Democratic Party, Carolyn Bennett from the federal Liberal Party and Quebec Aboriginal Affairs minister Geoffrey Kelley. Then, in a moment of pure political theatre, he seemed to point to an empty seat in the front row of the conference centre.

"I would have liked to thank somebody from the federal government today but obviously that's not the case," said Picard, the Quebec regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations. The verbal jab elicited cheers from the audience.

Opponents of the Conservatives seized on their absence from the AFN's general assembly Tuesday to decry what they say is a broken relationship between Canada's First Nations and the federal government.

"To me the fact that the government is not represented at this assembly, this week, with a federal election in October, it's a perfect testimony of where they stand on indigenous issues in this country," said Picard. "The last time they bothered to return my calls, it's so far back I can't remember."

Picard pointed to recent news reports that the Conservatives have allowed \$1 billion in First Nations funding lapses in the past five years. These cuts come despite chronic poverty on reserves across the country and a national aboriginal housing crisis, according to a recent Senate report.

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde is seizing on this so-called broken relationship to orchestrate a national voter registration movement in hopes that First Nations will have an impact on October's federal elections. Bellegarde has identified 51 ridings that could be in play but only a few of those are within Quebec.

Meanwhile, NDP leader Thomas Mulcair and Liberal boss Justin Trudeau were in Montreal Tuesday to court the AFN leadership. Both party leaders spoke before the assembly and its delegates.

Though voter turnout has traditionally been low among Quebec First Nations, Picard says things could change in the coming election.

"In light of the very exceptional political context today, after nine years of the Conservatives in power and to see so much distrust from our community toward the federal government, things might change," he said.

For his part, Kahnawake grand chief Joe Norton says he won't call on his people to vote in federal elections and said he won't engage with Ottawa through traditional channels.

"We'll force them to the table, that's the only way we'll meet with the federal government," said Norton. "We're all for cooperation... But they have to come to the table."

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/assembly-of-first-nations-chief-calls-for-mass-voter-registration-in-hope-of-ousting-conservatives>

Trudeau: Tories 'Abandoned' Shoal Lake 40 First Nation Reserve

CP | By Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Posted: 07/07/2015 10:51 am EDT Updated: 07/08/2015 9:59 am EDT



Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau says the federal government has "abandoned its responsibility" to a First Nation cut off from the outside world and living under one of the longest boil-water advisories in Canada.

Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, which straddles the Ontario-Manitoba boundary, was carved from the mainland to build an aqueduct to send fresh water to Winnipeg at the turn of the last century. It has no all-weather road and has been without clean water for 17 years.

Trudeau called the situation "inexcusable" in a statement Tuesday. If elected in the fall a Liberal government would fund the road project, he said.

"Shoal Lake 40 First Nation has been cut off from the rest of Canada, with inadequate access to the most basic necessities," Trudeau said. "The situation requires an urgent response, yet for years the federal government has abandoned its responsibility to the First Nation."

Both the City of Winnipeg and the Manitoba government have offered to share the cost of building a road, but Ottawa has refused to commit.

Reserve residents were left in tears last month when Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford, the MP for the area, visited the band but refused to agree in principle to partially fund construction. Crowdfunding is underway now to raise Ottawa's estimated share of \$10 million to build the road.

Every year, people from the reserve risk their lives walking across the ice trying to get to their front door. Many have died.

The aging ferry that residents rely on in the summer failed to pass government inspection in the spring, prompting the reserve to move elders out and declare a state of emergency.

The ferry has since been patched up but will need more extensive repairs to function next year.

This situation can't continue, Trudeau said.

"This has been a long-standing issue that was caused in the early 20th century when a decision was made to cut off the island from the mainland. Canada and its partners have never taken responsibility for it," Trudeau said after addressing the Assembly of First Nations in Montreal Tuesday.

The Conservative government has shown it is not willing to "step up on righting historical wrongs that we collectively, as a country ... continue to be responsible for," he added.

NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair declined an interview request but mentioned the reserve in a speech Tuesday to the Assembly of First Nations. He suggested an NDP government would also fund construction of an all-weather road.

"It's time we had ... a prime minister who comes to the table when provinces and communities set their priorities, as in the case of Shoal Lake 40," Mulcair told the assembly. "The federal government needs to show leadership."

All three levels of government have chipped in \$1 million each for a design study.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said he wasn't available for an interview. Emily Hillstrom said in an email that a "decision on funding the road itself will be made when that design study is completed."

But Chief Erwin Redsky of Shoal Lake 40 said a design study is no guarantee the road - Freedom Road as it's known - will be built. An all-weather road would allow the reserve to tap into economic development and, eventually, build a water-treatment plant.

Redsky said he's glad the reserve's plight had caught Trudeau's attention, but he said building the road isn't a political issue.

Shoal Lake 40 residents should not have to risk their lives to get groceries or pick up their mail, Redsky said.

"For us, it's a matter of survival," he said. "It's a matter of our basic human rights."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/07/07/federal-tories-abandoned_n_7744278.html

UN Human Rights Committee grills Canada over mining, aboriginal treatment

24 specific questions included concerns over refugee health cuts, anti-terrorism measures, charity clampdown

The Canadian Press Posted: Jul 08, 2015 9:30 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 08, 2015 9:30 AM ET



Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada, argued in his organization's submission to the UN Human Rights Committee's review of Canada's performance that human rights initiatives taken by Canadian extractive industries operating abroad are only voluntary, and no enforceable code of conduct exists. Amnesty urged the committee to recommend a way for overseas litigants to pursue legal action in Canadian courts. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

The federal government is sidestepping a UN panel's request to explain how Canadian mining and resource companies deal with human rights complaints.

Tuesday was the Canadian government's first opportunity to address the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva, which is conducting the first review in 10 years of Canada's compliance to a major international treaty.

The committee, comprised of 18 experts, heard repeated concerns about Canada's extractives industry, the treatment of aboriginals and anti-terrorism measures from two dozen groups, including the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International.

The committee asked Canada to provide answers to 24 separate questions about how it implements the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — including how it monitors the human rights conduct of Canadian resource companies operating abroad, some of which face lawsuits alleging abuses.

"Please inform the committee of any measures taken or envisaged to monitor the human rights conduct of Canadian oil, mining and gas companies operating abroad," said the list of issues given by the committee to Canada last fall in preparation for Tuesday's testimony.

"Please also inform what the available legal venues are in the state party for victims of human rights abuses arising from overseas operations of Canadian extractive firms."

Laurie Wright, the senior Justice Department official who led Canada's delegation, did not address the issue in her six-page opening statement.

Instead, she highlighted four topics, two of them related to the treatment of aboriginal affairs, along with the terrorism and the treatment of immigrants.

"While challenges remain, we are committed to addressing them, and to our ongoing work in building an open, free and peaceful society where people from diverse backgrounds can live side by side and prosper," Wright said in prepared remarks.

Enforcement needed?

But at the hearing, the committee members persisted. They returned to the topic of Canada's foreign-based resource companies and several other areas of questioning that were not addressed in Wright's opening remarks.

Amnesty International, in its submission to the panel, argued that any human rights initiatives taken by companies are purely voluntary, and no enforceable code of conduct exists. It urged the committee to recommend a way for overseas litigants to pursue legal action in Canadian courts.

Alex Neve, the executive director of Amnesty International, pointed out that the federal government's jurisdiction extends only to conduct within Canada's borders.

Neve, who attended the hearing, said committee members pointed out that the UN treaty deals not only with what happens within the borders of a country, but also the general conduct of its citizens.

The committee also asked Canada to address a number of other areas that have sparked controversy, including:

- what measures had been taken to compensate Abdullah Almalki, Ahmed El-Maati and Muayyed Nureddin, who were tortured in Syrian prisons after [Canadian officials were found partly to blame](#) for sharing information about them.
- whether the government planned to [reverse cuts to health services for refugee claimants](#), and "respond to allegations that such cuts may undermine their rights to life and freedom from ill-treatment."
- asking the government to comment on allegations that it has taken [punitive measures to limit the freedom of expression](#) of "civil society organizations and human rights defenders that promote women's equality, the rights of Palestinians, and environmental protection and corporate social responsibility..."

Wright did not specifically respond to those three issues in her opening address to the committee.

The panel will announce its findings in two weeks, after reviewing the performance of a series of countries, including Britain, France and Uzbekistan.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/un-human-rights-committee-grills-canada-over-mining-aboriginal-treatment-1.3142735>

Uprising against Kap Cree chief

By [Alan S. Hale](#), The Daily Press

Wednesday, July 8, 2015 6:08:45 EDT PM



Members of the Kapuskasing Cree at a meeting on July 4 vote to approve a motion calling for the resignation of Gaius Napash as their chief and for the band council to be dissolved.

TIMMINS - A faction of members within the Kapuskasing Cree is demanding their self-appointed chief, Gaius Napash, step down from his position and the band council be dissolved.

They also want the band's central bank account frozen until an investigation into the group's finances being conducted by the local Ontario Provincial Police comes to a conclusion.

The police investigation was launched last week.

The protesting band members say Napash's leadership has been plagued by a lack of transparency, particularly in relation to the management of the group's bank account which only the chief and his cousin, Archie Sutherland, have control.

They also question the legitimacy of the band council which they say has been stacked with Napash's family members.

In spite of all this, the last straw appears to have been the behaviour of the chief and deputy chief when challenged by members on these issues.

The questions regarding the unaccounted-for spending from the band's central fund prompted the OPP last week to launch an investigation into the band's finances. Police

have already interviewed staff at the Caisse Populaire branch in Kapuskasing where the band has its organizational bank account.

The Daily Press conducted its own month-long investigation into the matter, and while there were many questions raised surrounding Napash and his leadership, there was no evidence presented that he has committed any crime.

That said, there is evidence that he may be breaking the transparency rules in his group's constitution. Financial documents show he has been spending thousands upon thousands of dollars without explanation to his membership, including writing a \$5,000 cheque to himself. And the only political body capable of removing his ability to access the band's central funds, the band council, has been effectively purged of anyone not a part of his inner circle.

Although attempts were made over multiple days through different avenues to get an interview with Napash for this story, he did not respond to requests from the The Daily Press.

Kapuskasing Cree

The Kapuskasing Cree is not officially recognized as First Nation, but it wants to be.

The group, which is an offshoot of the Moose Cree First Nation, was formed in 2010 after its members split with the band over opposition to particular hydroelectric projects by Ontario Power Generation which they said threatened old burial sites and traditional traplines.

Despite having been separated for five years, the Kapuskasing Cree is not recognized as a First Nation by the government, and their efforts to be recognized as such are opposed by the Moose Cree. Although they technically have no claim to a traditional territory, some private companies such as Xeneca Power Development have set up aboriginal consultations for their Mattagami River projects with the Kapuskasing Cree separate from their talks with the Moose Cree.

According to members The Daily Press spoke to, the band has never had a formal election. Napash was made the group's spokesman during the separation and merely assumed the role of chief in the media and their dealings with private industry afterwards.

"He started out as our spokesperson and he turned around and elected himself chief," said band member Andrew Sutherland. "Archie (Sutherland) was also never elected deputy chief."

The Band Council

Over the past month, the Daily Press spoke to four different band councillors, including Andrew Sutherland, who all said they were effectively removed from participating in the band council after they were no longer being notified of when or if council meetings were taking place.

On a legal document filed in 2013 by the Kapuskasing Cree as part of a ongoing lawsuit against the provincial government and the Moose Cree, Andrew Sutherland, Pricilla

Chum, Suzanne Napash, and Joyce Sutherland were all named as band councillors. Together they comprised more than half of the seven-person council, but now only hear about meetings after they are held.

Another concerned Kapuskasing Cree band member, Bernice Sutherland, confirmed there has been no election since the filing of that document.

“They should all technically still be on the band council. They’ve been recognized as councillors in the courts,” said Bernice Sutherland. “The other council that they’ve made, they didn’t come to the community and have a vote or anything like that. They just appointed who they wanted to the council.”

Although still officially part of the band council, the last time Suzanne Napash was able to attend one of the council meetings is when her son told her he had noticed it taking place at the Ontario Power Generation’s Smoky Falls dam, where several band members have contract work jobs.

“He said to me, ‘You know there’s a meeting going on. Why are you at home?’ And I said, ‘What meeting?’” recalled Suzanne Napash.

After getting a ride to the dam, she walked into the meeting to find all the participants in the meeting were family members of the chief.

“It was all family sitting there. Gaius’ sister, brothers, Archie (Sutherland’s) brothers and sisters; nobody from the real council was there,” said Suzanne. “I said, ‘So this is what’s going on now?’ Everybody shut up and didn’t want to say anything. I could feel the atmosphere change, telling me I wasn’t supposed to be there.”

Although not told to leave the meeting, Suzanne Napash said it was clear she was not welcome. She also recalled the chief asking her days later why she had wanted to be at that meeting since she never came to them anyway.

According to Suzanne Napash, council meetings have been held at irregular times and places including hotels, the Kapuskasing town hall and in one instance at Gaius Napash’s brother’s home after 11 p.m.

“How do I know that? My son used to go and visit (a woman) who lived upstairs. He asked, ‘What’s going on down there?’ and was told they were having a meeting,” she recalled.

When she learned the council was meeting with Tembec, the company that owns the mill in Kapuskasing, she asked to be told when and where it was happening so she could attend. That didn’t happen.

“That was a big decision that was made without council,” fumed Suzanne Napash.

The Daily Press reached out to the management of the Tembec mill in Kapuskasing to find out what project they met with the Kapuskasing Cree about, but the company did not respond.

The Bank Account

Another reason why Gaius Napash has been asked to step down as chief surrounds the management of the group’s collective funds. There have been questions whether money

intended for the community and the band itself is being used for personal purchases and expenses.

A significant portion of that money has made its way into the account from public coffers.

The publicly owned Ontario Power Generation (OPG) has a partnership agreement with the Moose Cree which includes guarantees of contract work for the First Nation's businesses during the construction of their dams along the Mattagami River. According to OPG spokesman Neil Kelly, who talked to The Daily Press before the police investigation began, the energy company hired Kiewit Alarie to award contracts for the dam projects.

"They awarded various contracts to Moose Cree members and Moose Cree member businesses for a number of years," confirmed Kelly.

Some of those contracts went their chief's own company, Napash Construction, which in turn contributed 30% of the value of their contracts into the Kapuskasing Cree's account. According to one financial statement, Napash Construction, received almost \$700,000 for their work on OPG dam projects, \$300,000 of which was then transferred to the band – more than the agreement required.

It appears that Gaius Napash and his cousin Archie Sutherland have signing authority over an association bank account under the Kapuskasing Cree name worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the past, Gaius Napash has written cheques from this account to himself, ostensibly so he can pay for band expenses, instead of making them out to the people or businesses the money was ultimately going to.

According to financial documents leaked to The Daily Press, on Dec. 12, 2013, a cheque for \$5,000 was made out to Gaius Napash and in the memo line it reads "lawyer." The band's lawyer is Steve Reynolds. But other financial statement show that Reynold's fees are paid straight from the band's account via money transfers, not out of Gaius Napash's pocket.

Similarly, a \$900 cheque from Sept. 14, 2012, was made out to cash, with a memo line reading "lawyer travel."

Other cheques for \$375 for an Elder's funeral and \$400 for "Sonny C." were made out to Gaius Napash instead of to a funeral home or Sonny C.

Although organizational bank accounts require both Gaius Napash and Archie Sutherland to sign cheques and approve transfers, a hand written note from the deputy chief to Caisse Populaire on Feb. 20, 2013 gave permission for Gaius Napash to approve transfers on his own if he was not available.

According to Caisse Populaire, the only way to rescind that signing authority over the account is by order of the association's board – which in this case would be the band council filled with the chief and deputy chiefs family members.

Suspensions among the membership about the bank account were first piqued three years ago from allegations that a boat with a motor and camping trailer had been purchased with band money but no one outside of chief's family got permission to use.

“He also has a trailer that hauls wood, which he said he bought for the Kapuskasing Cree,” said Bernice Sutherland. “We’ve asked to use it, and we can’t because he said he was afraid we might break it.”

Although resistant, the chief did yield to pressure and on May 30, he provided a summary of band’s finances that contained no itemized expenses. The membership was not satisfied, and that is when tempers flared.

“(Gaius) told us we weren’t privileged to see the full financial statements,” recalled Bernice Sutherland. “It got to the point where my father (Andrew Sutherland) was saying something, and Archie said he was taking it personally and would go outside and slap him ... That’s just something you don’t say to an Elder.”

Following this incident, there have been calls on Gaius Napash to apologize for his deputy chief’s behaviour.

Even if all of the spending from the account is on the level, the group’s constitution stipulates that the band’s government must “promote openness, transparency and disclosure in government decision making and operations” as well as “assign fiscal and political accountability of Kapuskasing Cree First Nation Members.”

Calls for resignation and investigation

After the confrontation at the May 30 meeting, the group of Kapuskasing members concerned by Gaius Napash’s leadership advertised that they were going to hold an emergency meeting to discuss the subject on July 4.

Just before the meeting took place, Gaius Napash’s common-law partner Joanna Wynne posted on the Facebook page the group uses as a message board that there was no meeting occurring at all. A meeting was in fact held.

Several members showed up for the formal meeting where a motion was passed asking for Gaius Napash, Archie Sutherland and the members of the current band council to step down and for the bank account to be frozen until the OPP finishes its investigation, which may involve a forensic audit of the account.

Pierre Dorval, the general manager of the Kapuskasing branch of Caisse Populaire, confirmed he has already met with the police and that the credit union will fully cooperate with the investigation. He also said they would see what they can do about the membership’s request that the account be frozen.

“It will all depend on the legal aspect of what they can bring to us (requesting the account be frozen),” said Dorval.

Gaius Napash has not publicly responded to the calls for his resignation and would not respond to requests for an interview.

Direct Link: <http://www.timminspress.com/2015/07/08/uprising-against-kap-cree-chief>

First Nations combat 'Un-Fair Elections Act' with Rock the Vote

First Nations encouraged to hold identification clinics for their members

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 09, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 09, 2015 10:29 AM ET



Tania Cameron launched 'First Nations Rock the Vote' and is encouraging First Nations to hold information and identification clinics for their members (Tania Cameron/Twitter)

First Nations need to act now to ensure members have the proper identification to vote in the upcoming federal election, according to Dalles First Nation councillor Tania Cameron.

The one-time NDP candidate in Kenora, in northwestern Ontario, has turned her attention this election season to helping First Nations overcome the barriers to voting in what she calls the "Un-Fair Elections Act."

The act requires voters have two pieces of identification and eliminates vouching, a process that was frequently used in First Nations communities and lets a voter have someone swear to where he or she lives.

"I'm calling for registration days or ID clinics," Cameron said. "Communities should be hosting them once a month, at least, until the election."

Info package on Facebook

Cameron has set up a Facebook page called First Nations Rock the Vote, where people can find information on what qualifies as identification. She's also providing Elections Canada forms such as the Letter of Confirmation of Residence, that can be filled out by chief and council.

"One of the biggest things I was concerned about is the lack of civic addresses in the northern remote communities," Cameron said. "As well, a lot of the northern First Nations people might not have the ID such as a passport or a driver's license."

Data from the last election shows an average of 46 per cent of eligible voters in the 40 First Nations in the Kenora riding turned out to vote. However, there is a wide range of participation, from 88 per cent in Wabigoon Lake First Nation to 32 per cent in Wabaseemoong First Nation.

'Mobilize the vote'

The turnout is based on eligible voters in each community, a number Cameron said isn't reflective of the population.

"Because Elections Canada doesn't do the registering anymore, I know for a fact that a lot of communities on that list that say they only have 62 eligible voters, there's at least 400 on the reserve," she said.

Cameron said the [election has been a hot topic at the Assembly of First Nations](#) meeting she's attending this week in Montreal.

"Chiefs are saying, 'we have to mobilize the vote'," she said. "Some chiefs have even gone on to say that we should be looking at each of the riding numbers and seeing which party we should be supporting to get rid of the Conservatives, but there hasn't been a formal resolution to solidify that."

KENORA RIDING FIRST NATIONS – 2011 FEDERAL ELECTIONS

FIRST NATION	NDP	Con	Lib	Grn	Total	Elig. Voters	TURNOUT
FORT SEVERN	33	25	8	1	68	166	41%
BEARSKIN LAKE	94	2	14	1	111	242	46%
BIG TROUT LAKE	111	6	10	0	128	415	31%
WAPEKEKA	62	2	29	1	101	156	65%
KASABONIKA LAKE	84	6	40	0	132	324	41%
WEBEQUIE	114	4	116	1	237	387	61%
SUMMER BEAVER	65	3	41	0	110	208	53%
WUNNUMMIN LAKE	58	8	75	1	143	283	51%
WAWAKAPEWIN	VOID						
KINGFISHER LAKE	134	3	6	0	145	234	62%
WEAGAMOW LAKE	117	7	52	2	180	424	42%
NESKANTAGA	48	8	24	1	82	142	58%
FORT HOPE	79	34	44	0	159	506	31%
OSNABURGH	29	7	10	0	46	62	74%
SAUGEEN	2	3	1	1	8	13	62%
SACHIGO LAKE	63	0	23	0	87	184	47%
SANDY LAKE	135	7	420	3	567	673	84%
KEE-WAY-WIN	14	3	73	3	94	143	66%
MUSKRAT DAM	65	3	16	0	84	122	69%
NORTH SPIRIT LAKE	40	4	24	1	69	144	48%
DEER LAKE	51	8	79	4	142	364	39%

FIRST NATION	NDP	Con	Lib	Grn	Total	Elig. Voters	TURNOUT
POPLAR HILL	18	3	75	5	102	208	49%
PIKANGIKUM	27	28	10	5	75	652	12%
CAT LAKE	51	13	33	5	105	216	49%
SLATE FALLS	23	2	15	0	40	107	37%
WABASEEMOONG	57	8	25	1	93	288	32%
GRASSY NARROWS	88	10	18	5	123	372	33%
DALLES	20	3	10	3	38	69	55%
SHOAL LAKE 39	36	11	8	2	61	251	24%
SHOAL LAKE 40	45	5	7	0	57	61	93%
WASHAGAMIS BAY	21	8	2	0	31	55	56%
RAT PORTAGE	38	10	18	2	74	148	50%
NWA 33	17	0	7	0	24	47	51%
NWA 37	12	4	0	0	16	18	89%
WHITEFISH BAY	54	7	8	1	72	220	33%
ONIGAMING	79	2	16	0	97	188	52%
EAGLE LAKE	29	4	43	2	86	143	60%
WABIGOON LAKE	32	4	28	0	67	76	88%
LAC SEUL	30	9	22	3	65	155	42%
WABAUSKANG	VOID						
TOTAL FN VOTE	2075	274	1450	54	3919	8466	46%

Tania Cameron says this chart based on Elections Canada data shows how few voters are eligible in some First Nations. (Tania Cameron)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-combat-un-fair-elections-act-with-rock-the-vote-1.3143801>

First Nations and Metis people could become force in next Federal election, says analyst

Eagle Feather News editor says more organizing happening in aboriginal community

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 08, 2015 12:48 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 08, 2015 12:48 PM CT



Assembly of First Nations national Chief Perry Bellegarde is calling on more First Nations people to vote in the next federal election. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

According to a long-time observer of Saskatchewan First Nations and Metis politics, aboriginal people in Saskatchewan could become a serious political force in this year's federal election.

John Lagimodiere, editor of Eagle Feather News, has been watching coverage of this week's Assembly of First Nations (AFN) meetings in Montreal.

At the meetings, AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde urged First Nations people to get out and vote.

Traditionally, First Nations and Metis people haven't voted in federal elections. However, Lagimodiere thinks that's changing.

"I think it's a residual leftover from Idle No More," he said. "A lot of what's happening is happening on social media and people working the grassroots indigenous votes."

Lagimodiere said First Nations and Metis issues, from residential schools to the '60s scoop, have been front-page news for years now. He said that means people will become more mobilized.

"We're kind of at a pivotal time in Canadian history when it comes to aboriginal issues," he said. "If you look back in the last two years in the media, and just the overwhelming stories about missing and murdered aboriginal women, the last five or six years of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission touring the country, all of this history comes from somewhere."

Lagimodiere thinks there is going to be more 'traditional' politicking when it comes to First Nations and Metis communities, including phone canvassing and offering rides to voters on election day.

"Now we have a young, engaged, educated, growing middle class that realizes in order to take their place, they've got to give their vote."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/first-nations-and-metis-people-could-become-force-in-next-federal-election-says-analyst-1.3143404>

Aboriginal Sports

BBC to air radio feature on B.C. First Nations soccer pioneer Harry Manson

by [Martin Dunphy](#) on July 3rd, 2015 at 2:13 PM



The Harry Manson story is about to gain international recognition.

The BBC World Service will air a radio documentary about the pioneering B.C. First Nations soccer player early Saturday (July 4) at 1:05 a.m. PDT (4:05 a.m. EST, 9:05 a.m. GMT; go [here](#) for further details about podcast).

The 55-minute program, *Sportshour*, will feature several stories about Canadian heroes in advance of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2015 final taking place in Vancouver on Sunday (July 5).

Manson, known as **Xul-si-malt** (One who leaves his mark), was born on the Nanaimo Indian Reserve in 1879. He became captain of the all-Native Nanaimo Indian Wanderers team (which won the city championship in 1904 and also made it to the provincial semifinals) and was one of the first indigenous players to play in, and win, a provincial soccer championship, in 1903.

Manson also played for all three senior Nanaimo teams, the only aboriginal player to have done so.

He died in 1912 at age 32 in a coal-train accident in a Nanaimo railyard.

Xul-si-malt broke colour barriers at a time when Native players were jeered and threatened by spectators on Vancouver Island. Due largely to the persistent efforts of Vancouver resident **Robert Janning**, Manson has been inducted into the **Nanaimo Sports Hall of Fame**, the national **Soccer Hall of Fame** in Ontario, and, most recently (June 17), **Canada's Sports Hall of Fame** in Calgary.

The **B.C. Sports Hall of Fame** has passed on inducting Manson two years in a row. He has one remaining year of eligibility.

Janning earlier told the *Straight* of the BBC documentary: "He's going global; it's just amazing." Janning came across Manson's story while researching his 2012 [book](#) about the early days of soccer in B.C., *Westcoast Reign: The British Columbia Soccer Championships 1892-1905*.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/blogra/483126/bbc-air-radio-feature-bc-first-nations-soccer-pioneer-harry-manson>

Oilers' prospect Ethan Bear proud to be a role model for aboriginal kids

By Jim Matheson, Edmonton Journal July 5, 2015

If you're looking for what Ethan Bear is, he's a very good Western Hockey League defenceman for the Seattle Thunderbirds, who has played for Canada at the world under 18 championship in Switzerland this past spring and at last summer's Ivan Hlinka tournament, also wearing the maple leaf.

But if you want to know who Ethan Bear is, he's the fifth-round Edmonton Oilers' draft pick who is attending the Oilers prospects camp. He's also a kid carrying the torch for

other aboriginal hockey players, growing up on the Ochapowace First Nation in Whitewood, Sask.

“There’s a great deal of pride in that,” said Bear, who turned 18 the first day of the NHL draft when Connor McDavid was the first name called by the Oilers.

“I’m proud of who I am and where I come from and I get lots of support,” Bear said. “It’s really special. I really love my heritage.

“Growing up we had a rink right on the reserve, so after school my buddies and I would also go there. It was always open, at any time. The rink manager also kept it open for us. I give credit to them for making me who I am,” he said.

“My role model was my brother (Everett), who’s 31 and played at U of Manitoba, but I also like Jordin Tootoo and Carey Price. ... Jordin’s a really tough guy. I’m not like that, but I like his hard work and determination,” said Bear, who admits his favourite team was always Price’s Montreal Canadiens, until he tugged on an Oilers jersey.

Bear was gone from Ochapowace when he was 14, however. He went to Kelowna’s Pursuit of Excellence program, where the kids are in school for 2 ½ hours a day, with similar time on the ice, working on skills outside of math problems.

“I was thinking of going to Notre Dame (Wilcox, Sask.), which is only about two hours from the reserve, would have been a lot closer to home, but I had a friend at the Pursuit of Excellence.”

“It was pretty young but I lived with two of my best buddies. It wasn’t too hard because my mum (Geraldine) came every month. I wasn’t homesick,” he said.

Bear went 124th overall to the Oilers at the draft in Fort Lauderdale.

“I wasn’t sure where I was going to get drafted but to have my family there, it was pretty emotional because they supported me all the way. ... My agent took me down, thinking I’d go in the third or fourth round, but I’m really happy where I went,” said the engaging Bear, who lasted to the fifth round because he’s vertically challenged at 5’11” and 198 pounds, not four inches taller.

“I don’t think I’ve had a fight with that (his size). I think whatever league I’ve been in, I’ve managed well, playing against bigger guys,” said Bear. He’ll be the No. 1 D-man on the Thunderbirds in the upcoming season because Anaheim’s first-rounder Shea Theodore, a teammate of McDavid on Canada’s world under 20 team this past Christmas, is playing pro.

“He probably got drafted where he was because of his size, but he’s got really good hockey sense,” said Bob Green, the Oilers’ director of player development. “He’s got a pretty good game. ... I have to pick up his footspeed a bit; he’s got a good head (for the game). He’s got good enough skill to play in the National Hockey League.”

Bear, who could be a 50-60 point WHL defenceman this season because he’s got a big-time shot, along with playing a solid two-way game, also has a personality that brings people to him.

“It was interesting to see Bear when he played for Canada, how well-liked he was. If they were eating as a team, everybody wanted to sit with Ethan. Players gravitated to him,” said Tampa’s chief scout Al Murray.

While McDavid's getting most of the hype at the Oiler orientation camp, Bear doesn't feel slighted, one bit. He's the same as everybody else, loving his talent.

"It's pretty cool, how he's bringing in all these fans, how they're hollering and calling out to him. Less pressure on us, if he takes all the publicity. I don't mind at all," said Bear.

"He's very good. Fun watching him. Makes us better. We have to adjust our speed to his level," said Bear.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Oilers+prospect+Ethan+Bear+proud+role+model+aboriginal+kids/11189147/story.html>

Pan Am Games' Aboriginal Pavilion to feature Inuit, Dene performers

Indigenous arts festival to run in conjunction with Pan Am Games in Toronto

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 06, 2015 3:33 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 06, 2015 3:33 PM CT



Johnny Issaluk of Iqaluit is getting ready for his trip to Toronto where he will be taking part in the Pan Am Games' aboriginal pavilion by conducting workshops on Inuit Games. (Sima Sahar Zerehi)

Performers from Nunavut, Nunavik, N.W.T. and Yukon will be taking part in the upcoming [aboriginal pavilion](#) organized in conjunction with the upcoming Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in Toronto.

This pavilion will be the largest aboriginal music, comedy, dance and multi-disciplinary arts festival in the history of the games, bringing together more than 200 artists and performers.

Nelson Tagoona of Baker Lake, Nunavut, will perform in the pavilion's opening night showcase July 16 at the Fort York historic site. Other Northern acts on the bill are the N.W.T. Youth Ambassadors, Tuktoyaktuk's Siglit Drummers and Dancers, and the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers from Whitehorse.

Tagoona is known for his unique style of throat-boxing inspired by Inuit throat singing.

"I'm going to be kind of surrounded by all the chaos of the Pan Am Games; I'm really excited for that," he said. "I like performing in areas where there is a lot of hype."

Despite the fact that he has yet to release an album, Tagoona is already establishing a reputation as a power-house performer, a fact that has garnered him a spot in the opening showcase of the pavilion.



Nelson Tagoona of Baker Lake, Nunavut, is known for his unique throat-boxing. He will be one of the artists performing in the opening night showcase of the Pan Am Games' Aboriginal Pavilion. (Marcel Mason)

"We really want the opening showcase to get people excited for what's to come over the course of the rest of the festival," says Rheanne Chartrand the festival's artistic producer.

"Nelson represents the vibrancy of the younger generation. He brings dynamism to his performance," says Chartrand.

Iqaluit's Johnny Issaluk will present a workshop on Inuit Games as well as collaborate with N.W.T. Youth Ambassadors and students from the Toronto-area Dufferin Peel School District.

"Inuit traditional games, they have been around for centuries," says Issaluk.

"When you have your first hunt, or when you get married, or have a big gathering of some sort you celebrate; you throat sing and you dance, you tell stories and you play games. These games helped my ancestors stay physically healthy and mentally strong.

"I do a lot more than demonstrate; I portray the beauties and the riches of our culture."

Other Northern artists who are scheduled to perform during the cultural festival include Susan Aglukark, Leela Gilday and Elisapie Isaac.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/pan-am-games-aboriginal-pavilion-to-feature-inuit-dene-performers-1.3140410>

'Being seen is the message': At the Pan Am Games, Aboriginal performers take a crucial step into the spotlight

[Kristel Aubrey Jax, Special to National Post](#) | July 8, 2015 2:07 PM ET



A Tribe Called Red

In the cultural bustle that will accompany the Pan Am Games in Toronto this summer, one the Games' non-competitive events is also among its most important. From July 10-26 and August 7-9, the Aboriginal Pavilion at Fort York Garrison Common and Harbourfront Centre will draw performers, athletes, artists, artisans, and voices from across the Americas, as Indigenous communities mount a platform to tell their own stories at the Games.

Musical programming, carefully planned along with the Pavilion's wide-ranging workshops, dance and theatre performances, as well as art, craft, and culinary offerings, will pull Aboriginal artists from across Canada to ultimately create one of the summer's surest bets for boundary-pushing and forward-thinking performances.



Iskwe

From geography to genre, the diversity of the lineup at the Pavilion speaks to the many facets of Canada's under-represented Indigenous music scene, which is finally starting to reach new audiences thanks to everything from breakout crossover acts to increased representation online. Music fans are recognizing that ignoring Aboriginal music means cutting themselves off from groundbreaking sounds and captivating voices.

Electronic music fans will recognize one such breakout group, Ottawa's Polaris Prize-nominated EDM producers A Tribe Called Red (ATCR), who have been filling dance floors worldwide and will perform at the Pavilion July 18, as well as twice on the Panamanian festival stage.

ATCR's Bear believes the Pavilion is integral to the 2015 Games. "If we're going to be celebrating competition in the Americas," he tells me, "we have to acknowledge the Indigenous people of the territory where the Games will be happening." Bear hopes the Pavilion will lead to an increased awareness and understanding of Indigenous people and culture to both international attendees and Canadians. In the wake of Chief Justice Murray Sinclair's Truth and Reconciliation report, it's an important time for Canada's Aboriginal communities to have their own voices heard.

"When you're coming from a people who are underrepresented in the media, it's really important to become visible," Bear explains. "Not only that, but to portray ourselves in the way that we see ourselves, in a way that is true to us." For now, access to wider audiences itself is a political statement: "at this point, just being a part of these things and being seen is the message."

Yet activism is far from the only purpose of the Pavilion. "We're just trying to make good dance music," Bear confides. "If we can use that to push our message that's amazing, but we're just out here to have a good time, and I think that speaks more to the healing than anything else. We're here to help people enjoy themselves."

When you're underrepresented in the media, it's really important to become visible

ATCR are just one among many of the Pavilion's boundary-pushing acts who weave activism with music. Artistic Director Rhéanne Chartrand spent months putting together the nightly lineups.

"Music is a vehicle for dealing with issues we can't necessarily express in words, or in a political or conversational realm," Chartrand explains via email. "The fact that we're able to freely express ourselves through cultural artistic practices, both traditional and contemporary, is in and of itself a form of activism, as historically Aboriginal peoples were denied this freedom of expression."

Chartrand names scheduled performers BC hip hop duo Mob Bounce, Yukon folk artist Leela Gilday, Toronto R&B artist IsKwé, and beat boxer Nelson Tagoona as a few among many who bridge sound with social justice. "[These artists] address issues in their music that they are impassioned about," Chartrand continues. "There's the historical trauma of residential schools, recently brought to the forefront of the Canadian political landscape with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples, or stereotypes perpetuated by the 'Hollywood Indian.' "



Susan Aglukark

Each artist I chatted with via email agreed that the Pavilion comes at a key moment for Aboriginal visibility. "When we tell our story, we make it okay for others to acknowledge their own story," Mob Bounce say of their conscious hip hop. "We've all have been equally affected by the Indian Act, and we're all intergenerational survivors on our own healing journey."

Juno nominated folk-rock singer-songwriter Leela Gilday elaborates on how Aboriginal performers use activism to inform their musical identity, and vice versa: “If I were to make a sweeping generalization, I would say that most Aboriginal artists in Canada feel the need to explore identity, both the political and personal, through our art. This may be viewed as activism, but in another sense it’s simply a part of being Native in this day and age. The intent of my own music is in part healing and empowerment. The act of being heard is extremely powerful.”

Like Gilday, many of the Pavilion’s performers directly confront difficult themes in their songwriting. Iskwé, whose deep vibrato could easily share a bill with powerfully voiced pop singer Adele, mourns Canada’s over 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women on her recent track “Nobody Knows.” “This is my way of expressing my voice, my sentiment, my emotion,” Iskwé tells me. “This is how I connect to the ones we’ve lost.”

On opening night at the Pavilion, audiences will have a chance to see Yukon soloist Nelson Tagoona, who spins traditional Inuit throat singing with contemporary beat boxing. Tagoona is also a motivational speaker, who urges Northern youth to find solace and hope through the arts. “Music has opened a door for me where I could share very personal feelings,” Tagoona confides. “I’ve seen many tears from the stage, as well as strong positive energy. Music is a powerful tool, and it should never be underestimated.”

Unawareness or lack of understanding of Indigenous music hasn’t stopped moments of healing, illumination, and musical innovation, but increased visibility will spread those benefits further and wider both internationally and at home in Canada. Stephen Harper’s infamous dismissal of missing and murdered Indigenous women — that it “isn’t really high on our radar” — speaks to the indifferent climate that Native artists are too often forced to produce work in. It’s always been the right time to tune into Native voices, but with aids from the overwhelming contents of Sinclair’s Truth and Reconciliation report to the often danceable programming at the Aboriginal Pavilion, perhaps now mainstream Canada is ready to listen.

For more information on the performers and cultural activities of the pavilion, visit alppavilion.ca

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/arts/being-seen-is-the-message-at-the-pan-am-games-aboriginal-performers-take-a-crucial-step-into-the-spotlight>

Pan Am Games make headway with indigenous protocol

Aboriginal Peoples finally getting the proper recognition with event

By Jordan Wheeler, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 09, 2015 5:34 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 1:30 PM ET



This year's torch relay was received by Chief LaForme of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto. (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation)

When visiting indigenous territory that isn't your own, the protocol is to acknowledge whose territory you are on and thank them for allowing you there. If done properly, they welcome you in return.

That protocol was not adhered to when athletes from across the Americas converged on traditional Cree, Ojibway and Métis territories for the fifth Pan Am Games on July 24, 1967, in Winnipeg.

The only indigenous participation that day involved pancakes.

To refresh, the torch for the 1967 games would be relayed from St. Paul, Minn.

Ten indigenous young men, the Frontrunners, all track and field standouts at their respective residential schools, were chosen to run the torch to Winnipeg.

The five-day, 800-kilometre odyssey led to the gates of the Winnipeg stadium where they were told to hand the torch over to a non-indigenous runner who carried the flame inside.

As the crowd cheered, the Frontrunners were taken to the old Pancake House at Polo Park for breakfast and subsequently shipped back to their respective residential schools.



Aboriginal teenagers brought the torch from St. Paul, Minn., to Winnipeg, only to have a white athlete take the glory lap in 1967. (Canadian Press)

Thirty-two years later, Manitoba apologized for that transgression and seven, surviving Frontrunners participated in the opening ceremonies of the 1999 Pan Am Games.

The younger Dave Courchene held the torch as they entered the Winnipeg stadium in ceremonial canoes. As Charlie Nelson would later say, they "finally got to complete the journey."

Step in the right direction

The gesture was a step in the right direction but the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010 went further. Organizers recognized that the event would be taking place on the shared, traditional territory of the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh and those "Four Host Nations" became the first Indigenous Peoples ever to become equal partners in planning and hosting an Olympic event.

A couple of months before the 2010 Winter Olympics, the city of Toronto and southern Ontario were awarded the 2015 Pan Am Games.

Following Vancouver's lead — given that the bulk of the sporting events will take place on traditional Ojibway territory — the Toronto 2015 Pan American/Parapan Am Games Organizing Committee (TO2015) signed a protocol agreement last May with the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation (MNCFN) who became the official host First Nation of the Games.

The Six Nations of the Grand River, the Huron-Wendat First Nation and the Métis Nation of Ontario signed memorandums of understanding with TO2015, recognizing their involvement in the Games, bringing the number of host nations to four. But when the athletes arrive, it will be the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation that welcomes them.

Pan Am 2015 ups the ante

Chief Bryan LaForme stated in a press release that the games represent, "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase the roots, language, traditions and culture of the Ojibway and to promote respect for and recognition of Indigenous Peoples across Canada and the Americas."

The Honourable David Peterson, chair of TO2015, added the relationship, "demonstrates the importance TO2015 and its partners place on ensuring Aboriginal Peoples have meaningful involvement in the games — and that the games are a catalyst for the further future positive development between aboriginal people and Canadian society."



The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation officially welcomed the flame to the Official Host First Nation community at a June celebration. (Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation)

Peterson's words sound like a Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) recommendation and one hopes the proof will be in the pudding but so far, so good.

Among other duties, MNCFN will host the Aboriginal Pavilion that will be sure to attract a large number of visitors. The Indigenous Pavilion at the Vancouver Olympics attracted more than any other.

Flame travels across borders

Indigenous involvement in the Games extends well beyond Canadian soil, however. This year's torch relay began at the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan, Mexico, with a ceremonial lighting of the torch by the Aztecs. LaForme and MNCFN elder Garry Sault were in attendance.

The flame was flown to Canada and taken to Harbourfront Centre where it was met by canoes filled with members of the four host nations. LaForme was the first to receive the torch and in his speech he encouraged people to "embrace the spirit of healthy competition, and embrace the spirit of kinship with each other and our ties to the earth."

And so began a 40-day journey. The flame was taken to 130 communities across Ontario and Canada. Day 20 of the trek saw the flame reach the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation community itself.

A day-long celebration was co-hosted by Ron MacLean and Waneek Horn-Miller and the community was particularly honoured that original Frontrunners Charlie Nelson, Bill Chippeway, Charlie Bittern and William Merasty were in attendance.

The four are also scheduled to participate in the opening ceremonies in Toronto on July 10. Officially kicking off the 2015 Games that morning will be the traditional Three Fires Ceremony (Three Fires refers to the Three Fires Confederacy which includes the Ojibway, Odawa and the Potawatomi nations).

There were no traditional ceremonies in Winnipeg in 1967. Just 10 Indigenous teenagers sent for pancakes.

You've come a long way Pan Am Games ... a long way.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/pan-am-games-make-headway-with-indigenous-protocol-1.3145094>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Wood Buffalo National Park gets attention of UNESCO committee

Mikisew Cree gets attention of UNESCO world heritage committee

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 03, 2015 12:06 PM MT Last Updated: Jul 03, 2015 12:06 PM MT



Park officials say Wood Buffalo National Park is home to the only natural, self-sustaining nesting flock of whooping cranes in the world (Klaus Nigge/Parks Canada/Wood Buffalo National Park)

The issue of mine and hydro dam development and its effect on Wood Buffalo National Park has caught the attention of UNESCO thanks to a First Nation in northern Alberta.

The Mikisew Cree First Nation petitioned the organization about the park, which has been a UNESCO world heritage site for 32 years.

At a meeting in Germany this week, the UNESCO world heritage committee called on Canada to hold off on developing more mines and dams over fears they could cause permanent damage to the park.

They are sending a mission to assess the park and report back.

Melody Lepine, director of industry and government relations for the Mikisew Cree, welcomed the decision.

"[The mission] is going to investigate and we feel it's going to find all of the things that we have communicated to the committee," she said.

The Mikisew Cree are concerned how site C, the third dam planned for the Peace River, will affect the Peace-Athabasca delta.

Dam construction is set to start in B.C. this summer. Since the area was not included in the environmental assessment of the project, Lepine said Canada has no evidence to claim the dam will have no impact.

Lepine hopes attention from UNESCO will compel the federal government to take action.

"Canada prides itself on its national parks and its pristine environment, so this is sort of an embarrassment that this crown jewel of our nation is under threat," she said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/wood-buffalo-national-park-gets-attention-of-unesco-committee-1.3137478>

Ottawa marks legal protection of 12-year-old Nunavut national park

“Until last summer the park was not officially enshrined”

JIM BELL, July 03, 2015 - 2:12 pm



Ex-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien speaks Aug. 23, 2003 in Iqaluit at the "creation" of Ukkusiksalik National Park. The 20,800-square-kilometre national park did not get official legal status until Aug. 12, 2014. (FILE PHOTO)

Like they say, it's better late than never.

Though the federal government "created" Ukkusiksalik National Park in 2003, the granting of legally-enforceable protected status to the 20,800-square-kilometre area surrounding the Kivalliq region's Wager Bay wasn't marked until this past July 2.

That's when Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq, the federal environment minister, flew to Nauyasat where she "officially opened" Ukkusiksalik amidst other celebrations aimed at marking the community's change of name from Repulse Bay.

"The park will not only promote our culture and traditions, it will foster tourism, create jobs and economic opportunities for Inuit living in surrounding communities," Aglukkaq said in a July 2 news release.

Those words could easily have been copied and pasted from a gushing speech that [Jean Chrétien, the former Liberal prime minister](#), gave at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit on Aug. 23, 2003, when he declared the park's creation.

Chrétien's oration was one of several long rambling speeches given that day, some of them from a squadron of Nunavut bigshots seated with him in the front row, during an event attended by numerous invited guests, journalists and curious members of the public.

That 2003 event was followed by a weekend feast and dance in Naujaat, a celebration that Chrétien did not attend.

But in Iqaluit he also signed an Inuit impact and benefit agreement for the project with Tongola Sandy, then the president of the Kivalliq Inuit Association, worth \$3 million in cash and containing provisions aimed at creating jobs and business opportunities for Kivalliq Inuit.

“The addition of Ukkusiksalik National Park of Canada ensures that a vast landscape will be protected for this generation and future generations to appreciate and enjoy,” Chrétien said that day.

Since then, Parks Canada has always listed Ukkusiksalik on its website as a national park, established in 2003.

The only problem is, Ukkusiksalik never was a legal national park with legally enforceable protected status under federal law.

That didn’t occur until [Aug. 12, 2014, when the federal cabinet added Ukkusiksalik to the list of parks](#) protected by the Canada National Parks Act.

“Until last summer the park was not officially enshrined under the Canada National Parks Act, which means that it was not officially a national park and did not have the same legal and environmental protections as a national park,” Jonathan Lefebvre, Aglukkaq’s senior communications advisor, said in an email.

Earlier in 2014, the park’s boundaries were finally settled, after the [KIA and the federal government swapped some parcels of land](#) to add 327 square kilometres to the approximately 20,000-square-kilometre national park.

And it was only this year, less than four months before a federal election expected this fall, that Aglukkaq, the minister responsible for Parks Canada, flew to Naujaat to mark the August 2014 enshrinement of Ukkusiksalik under the Canada National Parks Act.

Now, as in 2003, the Wager Bay area is valued for its history, landscape and abundant wildlife resources, on land and in the sea.

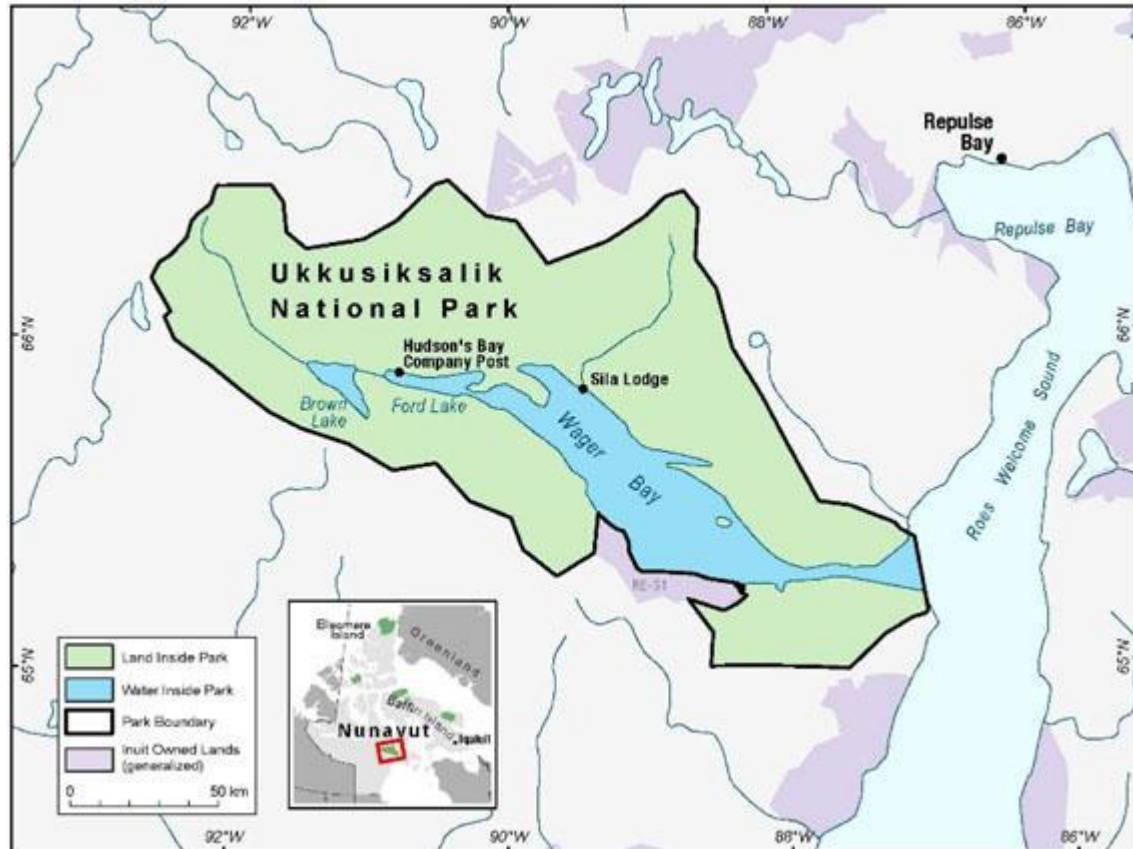
Its boundaries contain the remains of an old Hudson Bay Co. post and a former Roman Catholic mission. As well, a private tourism facility called Sila Lodge operated there for many years.

Its inventory of wildlife species includes caribou, muskox, wolf, polar bear, barren-ground grizzly and Arctic hare, as well as golden eagles, peregrine falcons and other species, Parks Canada says.

It’s also valued for its varied landscape, which includes eskers, mudflats, cliffs, rolling tundra banks and unique stretches of coastline.

As in other national parks, Inuit continue to exercise the right to hunt and fish there and it is managed under the oversight of a park management committee that includes representatives from Naujaat, Coral Harbour, Chesterfield Inlet, Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet.

The park’s operational centre is located in Naujaat.



This map shows the boundaries of Ukkusiksalik National Park, which weren't finalized until August 2014, even though the Kivalliq Inuit Association ratified an Inuit impact and benefits agreement for the protected area in 2001 and signed the deal in 2003. (IMAGE COURTESY OF PARKS CANADA)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674ottawa_marks_legal_recognition_of_12-year-old_nunavut_national_park/

Jane Fonda sounds climate change alarm in Toronto

Actor-activist loves Toronto, Naomi Klein and the environment — but not the Blue Jays.



Greenpeace campaigner Melina Laboucan-Massimo and actress Jane Fonda pose at the Sheraton Centre hotels hours before they planned to join a climate change march Sunday.

By: Christopher Reynolds Staff reporter, Published on Sat Jul 04 2015

Jane Fonda used to be a Blue Jays fan.

“I loved them,” she says, perched cross-legged on a sofa at a downtown Toronto hotel. “Until I married somebody that owned another team.”

But Fonda’s not in town to revive her fandom or her past betrothals. The 77-year-old actor and activist comes with a solar-fuelled fire in her belly.

“The climate change problem is the issue of our civilization. It will affect everything about our lives if we don’t do something about it,” she says.

Touching down Friday night from Los Angeles, the two-time Oscar winner is part of a parade of celebrities and distinguished guests who are putting foot to pavement in Sunday’s March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate.

The demonstration, organized by environmental group 350.org two days before Toronto hosts the [Climate Summit of the Americas](#), has wrangled participants from more than 100 organizations, from Greenpeace to Unifor, a union representing 40,000 oil and gas workers among its 300,000 members.

“I’m really amped up about the participation of the unions, because it’s a false choice that either you stay with the fossil fuel economy or you lose jobs,” Fonda says, her voice firm.

Active for nearly half a century in causes ranging from anti-war campaigns to gender equality, she insists it was Canadian author Naomi Klein’s 2014 bestseller on climate change, *This Changes Everything*, that jolted her out of complacency and lit her fire, as she puts it.

“It changed my life,” she says, unblinking.

Soon Fonda called up Klein, who passed on the digits of Greenpeace Canada’s executive director Joanna Kerr.

“I said, ‘What can I do?’ ” Fonda recalls.

Days later, a straw hat on her head, she was [speaking at last month’s rally in Vancouver](#) to protest planned offshore drilling by Shell.

The former fitness guru, who deliberately uses her influence as a film star to “amplify” important issues, says she is “moved” and “inspired” by the resilience of many of Canada’s First Nations.

“They’re really on the front lines.”

Melina Laboucan-Massimo, a Greenpeace energy campaigner, is a rising leader in that battle.

A member of the Lubicon Cree First Nation in northern Alberta, she remembers clearly when a [pipeline rupture sent more than three million litres of oil](#) gushing through the ground about 10 kilometres from her family home in the village of Little Buffalo in 2011. It was the biggest oil spill in Alberta since the mid-1970s.

“My family is breathing in the toxins. My family is sick, nauseous. Their eyes are burning,” she says.

Small communities have often been among the first to face the brunt of environmental blunders, in places like northern Alberta and [Lac-Mégantic, Que.](#), notes Laboucan-Massimo, 33.

Now many First Nations leaders feel like “economic hostages,” she says. They’re caught “between a rock and a hard place” due to the conflicting pressures of turning on the oil valve in their community — and reaping the royalties — and ensuring the health and safety of their people.

“But we do have a choice. We have to make that initiative and we have to do it now,” she says.

Laboucan-Massimo has raised money to install a photovoltaic power generator at the school in Little Buffalo. “Panel by panel, we’re showing politicians what true leadership is.”

As she and Fonda sit elbow to elbow, and with Mohawk and labour leaders poised to speak side by side at Sunday’s rally, the film star’s declaration that “trust is building” between non-aboriginal and indigenous communities resonates.

Forty-five years ago Fonda herself was arrested along with dozens of indigenous protesters as they attempted to occupy a U.S. army base in Seattle.

Her sense of social justice runs even further back.

“My dad” — Henry Fonda — “was not a man who talked a lot, but he did these movies, like *Grapes of Wrath*, *Young Mr. Lincoln*, *12 Angry Men*, and he had a special relationship to those kinds of characters because of their values,” she says. “They were characters who stood up for justice.”

Fonda carries that conscience with her still.

“When my time comes, I don’t want regret. And I know the regrets that I would have would not be about what I did; they’d be about what I didn’t do,” she said, referring to action on climate change.

Toronto is proof positive to Fonda that the planet is worth preserving.

“I discovered the parks and creeks and bike paths of Toronto in the 1970s, and they are unlike anywhere else. I would go (on my bike) for hours and hours and hours,” she recalls.

An indulgence every now and then never hurts, though: “Number two — the restaurants, oh the restaurants.

“I come through customs and I cross the border and I feel, I just feel right here,” she sighs. “I love Toronto and I love Canada.”

The March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate starts kicks off with a rally in front of the Ontario legislature in Queen’s Park at 1 p.m. Sunday. After speeches, demonstrators will south on University Ave., turn east on Dundas St., pivot north at Jarvis St. and wind up at Allan Gardens.

David Suzuki, Stephen Lewis, musician Joel Plaskett and First Nations advocate Ellen Gabriel are part of the ensemble set to stride in the march, expected to attract thousands.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/07/04/jane-fonda-sounds-climate-change-alarm-in-toronto.html>

Unused Nunavut narwhal tags can carry over to new year

But hunting narwhal dependent on seasonal migratory patterns

THOMAS ROHNER, July 06, 2015 - 12:45 pm



Nearly six dozen unused north Hudson Bay narwhal tags from last year will be available for use by hunters in 2015. (FILE PHOTO)

Inuit hunters in Nunavut's north Hudson Bay area can enjoy a lot more maktaaq this year — that is if they can find a narwhal pod migrating nearby this year.

Some 82 unused narwhal tags from last year's hunting season will carry over to this year's harvest, for a total of 239 tags for the region's 2015 harvest, according to a recent news release from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

The carry-over of last year's tags is possible because of an "integrated fisheries management plan," the July 3 release added — a plan developed over the past five years between NTI, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, local hunters and trappers organizations, regional wildlife organizations and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.

NTI vice-president James Eetoolook said in the release that the carry-over is "good news for Inuit harvesters [because] it allows Inuit to be partners in the management of narwhal harvesting."

"This is how we envisioned wildlife management would work when we negotiated the [Nunavut Land Claims Agreement] on behalf of Inuit," Eetoolook said.

Before the carry-over policy, the release said that unused tags were returned to the DFO, but now regional wildlife groups have one year to redistribute the previous year's unused tags among their communities.

Narwhal harvesting has been a controversial subject between the territorial and federal governments in recent years.

In 2011, the DFO banned the export of narwhal tusks and products from Nunavut out of concern for the mammal's population in Nunavut water — a decision [NTI challenged](#), saying it was based on “questionable data” and violated the NLCA.

The DFO [partially lifted that ban](#) later the same year.

The following year the federal fisheries department released a draft management plan which split Nunavut into six zones for harvesting narwhal.

The plan significantly reduced the allowable harvest for the north Hudson Bay sub-population to 57 animals.

Inuit organizations [criticized that draft plan](#) for using the same inaccurate data and hampering local fishing economies.

In 2012 the NWMB [held public consultations](#) on the DFO's new proposed management plan for narwhal before the plan was officially put into place in 2013.

The [final plan](#) increased harvestable narwhal across Nunavut from 734 to 1,280 animals.

At the time, NLCA beneficiaries could harvest 147 animals from the northern Hudson Bay sub-population — a population that hunters from Nunavut and Nunavik must share.

Louisa Pudluk, an administrator at the Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization, told Nunatsiaq News July 6 that an increased harvest might not make much of a difference to local hunters because narwhals only visit local waters once every four years.

“So the hunters fly up to Naujaat to harvest narwhal, but only if they bring their own tag,” Pudluk said.

Narwhal harvesting contributes significantly to the Naujaat economy, a 2011 study found, contributing about half a million dollars to the local economy.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674unused_nunavut_narwhal_tags_can_carry_over_to_new_year/

Opinion: First Nations communities rising to the challenge of resource projects

By Lana Eagle, Special to the Vancouver Sun July 7, 2015



Haisla chief councillor Ellis Ross is supportive of LNG projects proposed for Kitimat. For the first time in known memory, members of the community have jobs to pick from and residents are building new homes with mortgages they have obtained by themselves.

Resource development companies across British are making major proposals that collectively have the potential to reshape our province. To move ahead, each of these must clear a rigorous set of government-driven environmental approvals.

Just as important, these projects must also reach agreements with First Nations. This has always been the case, but for companies seeking certainty in the wake of a recent landmark Supreme Court ruling — the William decision, which for the first time recognized Aboriginal Title — these agreements are more important than ever before.

This is a positive development for First Nations people across British Columbia in many ways. First Nations have a deep and historic connection to the land, and it is important for our values to be reflected when decisions are being made about major projects.

People may assume this connection to the land will necessarily lead First Nations to opposition, although the truth is something quite different. That's because for too long, these projects have been cast amid an overly simplistic story of environment versus the economy. The reality is much more complex.

For First Nations leaders, assessing and approving a major project takes hard work and it takes courage. However, the hard work is worth it because when done correctly, the process can lead to projects that respect the environment and reflect First Nations values, while at the same time offer economic benefits to the First Nations and the community.

How do we get there? What is the right path?

Industry needs to consult early, and in a meaningful way, with First Nations. This is the only way to ensure First Nations communities have the information required to make an informed and a responsible decision. It is also the only way to foster the type of trust and respect needed among all parties to allow a project to proceed.

There are other benefits as well.

If done properly, this process can lead to quicker decisions and greater certainty, as the First Nation can move through its own review process at the same time as other levels of government are conducting their environmental assessments.

As interim executive director of the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business, I see tremendous opportunity on the horizon. As B.C.'s go-to organization for connecting industry and the Aboriginal business community, we work each day with organizations that recognize it is good business to build partnerships with Aboriginal businesses. That work proves to me what is possible.

Take the opportunities presented by the development of a liquified natural gas industry in B.C. The Haisla, for example, have developed a proactive relationship with LNG Canada, demonstrating the kind of steps that can lead to a positive outcome. Throughout the process, Haisla Chief Councilor Ellis Ross has been articulate and firm about setting the right conditions to ensure his community will benefit from the opportunities LNG can deliver.

Another interesting example is the Squamish First Nation, which is quietly blazing a new trail by conducting its independent environmental assessment into a proposal by Woodfibre LNG.

That nation's assessment is bringing First Nations values into a process that has not always been adept at taking into account our connection to the land.

Recently, Squamish Nation council announced 26 conditions Woodfibre LNG must meet before the Squamish Nation is willing to consider granting its approval for the proposed project. This is an exciting moment for everyone. No matter what the outcome, the Squamish have an opportunity on the national stage to show how a project can be assessed through early engagement, mutual trust and respectful dialogue.

These are just two examples of what can be a new era for B.C., where First Nations communities are rising to the challenge of approaching these projects to ensure that, if they proceed, they do so in a way that respects our values.

The time has come for First Nations communities to take their rightful place in the discussion about resource development. By doing so, we can help forge a true balance between the economy and the environment.

Lana Eagle is the interim executive director of the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Opinion+First+Nations+communities+rising+challenge+resource+projects/11195304/story.html>

B.C. appeal court won't hear case of First Nations man convicted of hunting eagles and selling remains

By Keith Fraser, The Province July 7, 2015



In a 2005 photo, conservation officers carry eagle remains found along the Dollarton Highway in North Vancouver.

The B.C. Court of Appeal has rejected the appeal of a man convicted of 16 counts of hunting and trafficking in eagles and other birds in a case that dates back more than 10 years.

The case involving Jerome Richard Seymour, a First Nations man who was sentenced to 48 days in jail and fined \$1,310 for the offences, began in the spring of 2005 when 50 bald eagle carcasses were discovered in North Vancouver.

Conservation officers launched an undercover operation to identify people involved in the trafficking of eagle parts and to collect evidence.

The operation eventually led to Seymour, a member of the Chemainus First Nation. In January 2006, Seymour sold a whole frozen bald eagle for \$80 to an undercover conservation officer. Over the next several months, he sold more eagles and other birds to the officer and was seen selling bird parts to others.

After he was charged with offences under wildlife legislation, Seymour's lawyers raised a number of legal issues, including several applications for mistrials.

He also claimed that he'd been entrapped and that he had an aboriginal right to do what he'd done, but he was convicted and sentenced in provincial court.

He appealed to the B.C. Supreme Court, raising a number of issues, including what he considered to be fresh evidence, but the appeal was dismissed.

Then he sought leave to appeal to the B.C. Court of Appeal, B.C.'s highest court, but had his application denied.

His sole argument was that the B.C. Supreme Court judge had erred in consideration of the fresh evidence, an argument rejected by Court of Appeal Justice Sunni Stromberg-Stein.

"While the defence ground of appeal raises a question of law alone, the proposed ground of appeal has no merit and no reasonable possibility of success," said Stromberg-Stein. "Therefore, it is in the interests of justice to bring an end to this long, protracted, drawn out matter."

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/technology/appeal+court+hear+case+First+Nations+convicted+hunting+eagles+selling+remains/11195307/story.html>

Assembly of First Nations to host national energy forum in February

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 8, 2015 | Last Updated: July 8, 2015 9:06 PM EDT



Manitoba Grand Chief Derek Nepinak says action against pipeline projects cannot wait until a proposed AFN forum in February 2016. Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS

The future of Canada's two largest pipeline projects hinges on the cooperation of First Nations throughout the country.

With billions of dollars and swaths of aboriginal territory at stake, the Assembly of First Nations will try to leverage their legal rights and force a negotiation with Canada's energy producers and the federal government. AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde said Tuesday he plans on hosting a national energy forum in February with the goal of getting big oil, Ottawa and First Nations at the table.

But some say the pipeline issue can't wait until next year and that aboriginal chiefs have to unite and resist the expansion of Alberta oil sands development across Canada. The

debate illustrates the complex relationship between the federal government, First Nations and natural resource exploitation.

“Yes we want to have a dialogue, a dialogue about pipelines and mining, about alternative sources of energy,” said Bellegarde, speaking at the organization’s general assembly in Montreal.

“We need to bring everybody together and find that common ground because right now (the discussion) is all over (the place). This is really too important to not bring people together to dialogue: the industry, the private sector, the public sector, First Nations governments, environmentalists, all these people will come together to find that common ground.”

While details about the forum are scant, there’s no sidestepping two simple facts: both pipeline projects pass through dozens of aboriginal communities and the companies building them are bound by the Canadian Constitution to consult with First Nations before moving forward.

Enbridge’s proposed Northern Gateway pipeline would transport Alberta oil to the West Coast for shipping to Asia, while TransCanada’s proposed Energy East project would connect new and existing pipelines to transport oil to refineries on the East Coast.

There is concern among First Nations people that an oil spill could devastate traditional lands.

As a result, Enbridge and TransCanada are facing injunctions from band councils and environmentalists across the country and some activists have threatened to physically block the construction of a pipeline through their reserves.

While many gathered at Wednesday’s assembly echoed Bellegarde’s enthusiasm for dialogue, Manitoba’s chiefs said the time for action is now.

“These are life and death situations,” said Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, of the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs. “We’re talking about the future of our communities and the future of our fresh drinking water.

“We cannot wait until 2016 to have these discussions, we need to have them now,” he continued. “We need to aggregate our best arguments now, our best processes now because if we wait until 2016 we’ll have missed our opportunity to get in the way of some of these big projects.

“(We need to) dictate the course of our future, which is really the future of our environment and our ability to sustain ourselves on our territory.”

Nepinak’s group represents 64 Manitoba First Nations — at least six of which would be affected by the \$12-billion Energy East pipeline. He said the Manitoba chiefs will host leaders from across the country in Montreal on Thursday in hopes of devising a unified strategy to fight the projects.

While AFN’s leadership has traditionally sought governmental change through the legislative process, Nepinak has a history of forcing confrontation with Ottawa. In December 2012 — at the outset of what would eventually become the [Idle no More protest movement](#) — Nepinak helped organize a protest march from the AFN’s general assembly in Gatineau to Parliament Hill.

In the end, the broad-shouldered Nepinak and other chiefs tried to bowl their way into Parliament but were escorted away by security. At the time, the Manitoba chief and others were frustrated over the Conservative Government's treatment of aboriginal peoples — who are still recovering from a legacy of government policies designed to eradicate indigenous languages, culture and land.

Despite his occasional heavy-handed approach to negotiating, Nepinak is recognized as a shrewd and popular leader who speaks for a more action-oriented wing of the AFN.

In Kanesatake — a Quebec Mohawk community near Montreal — opposition to the Energy East project could also play itself out in the courts. The proposed pipeline would pass through the northern edge of the Mohawk settlement.

“We won't roll over for anyone,” said Kanesatake Grand Chief Serge Simon. “Your pipeline violates my community's laws and if you want to take me to court, go for it, the judge will get an earful. ... We can't stand alone, we're forming an alliance with the (Quebec) Innu and communities in British Columbia. Let's form a vice between east and west and let's start squeezing them in.”

Simon has previously said his people will form barricades to prevent construction of the pipeline.

Meanwhile, a separate battle over indigenous land rights and energy concerns is playing out on the eastern edge of Quebec. With the provincial Liberals set to lift a moratorium on oil exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a First Nations coalition wants to stop the project in its tracks.

They claim a comprehensive, 12-year assessment — one that would include Quebec and the four Maritime provinces in the gulf — is needed before any drilling can take place. For centuries, the Mi'gmaq, Maliset and Innu have relied on Atlantic salmon stocks to preserve their way of life. The salmon fisheries account for about \$10 million in annual revenues for the Listiguj Mi'gmaq First Nation.

“I will never accept royalties from the oil sector,” said Jean-Charles Piétacho of the Innu of Ekuanitshit. “I'm not an activist, I'm not an alarmist, I'm a realist... I've seen what an oil spill can do to an ecosystem as fragile as the (gulf's).”

Though many First Nations face federal funding shortfalls and chronic poverty, there's a growing resistance to bridge that gap using royalties from the energy sector. Representatives from the Innu and Mi'gmaq both said they'd refuse oil money if a project went forward near their traditional fisheries. For her part, Maliset chief Anne Archambault said such a decision could only be made by the members of her band.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/business/energy/assembly-of-first-nations-to-host-national-energy-forum-in-february>

Quebec native groups seeking oil and gas moratorium in Gulf of St. Lawrence

Ancestral rights take precedence over oil, grand chief of Viger Maliseet First Nation says

By Stephanie Marin, The Canadian Press Posted: Jul 08, 2015 7:46 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 08, 2015 7:48 PM ET



Innu Chief Jean Charles Pietacho speaks to reporters at the Assembly of First Nations congress on Wednesday in Montreal. (Ryan Remiorz/The Canadian Press)

Quebec must impose a 12-year moratorium on oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to give time for a comprehensive assessment on possible risks to the ecosystem, the chiefs of three native groups said Wednesday.

The waters of the St. Lawrence are vital to the livelihoods of the Innu, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet nations and should be protected, they told a news conference in Montreal as the Assembly of First Nations continued its annual meeting.

'Never will I accept royalties that come from (the oil and gas sector).'- Innu Chief Jean-Charles Pietacho

They also asked federal party leaders to tell voters ahead of this fall's election where they stand on the protection of the Gulf from development.

Mi'kmaq Chief Scott Martin said he feared an environmental catastrophe in the St. Lawrence similar to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that devastated parts of the southern U.S. coastline.

Martin added there are currently "numerous knowledge gaps" within oil-industry reports on risks associated with drilling along the waterway.

"The gulf is a highly productive body of water and diversity is very rich," he told reporters.

"No one can tell us what effect a blowout like a Deepwater Horizon can have on the food chain."

Martin said he wants an "integrated assessment" of all the risks involved with resource exploitation in the area before Quebec grants exploration or drilling permits.

Native consent required, chiefs say

The chiefs said they decided the moratorium should last 12 years after calculating the time they thought it would take to conduct studies, write reports and consult the public.

Resource exploitation along the St. Lawrence River cannot be carried out without their consent, the chiefs said, adding the Supreme Court of Canada ruled native people must be consulted and accommodated before their territory can be used for commercial development.

Some chiefs were more hard line than others.

Innu Chief Jean-Charles Pietacho said his people won't be silenced with petrodollars.

"Never will I accept royalties that come from (the oil and gas sector)," he said.

Anne Archambault, grand chief of the Viger Maliseet First Nation, was more nuanced in her comments, saying she needed to consult her people before deciding on royalties.

She said her people's ancestral rights to the Atlantic salmon "take precedence over oil," adding 95 per cent of her community's revenue comes from the salmon industry.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-native-groups-seeking-oil-and-gas-moratorium-in-gulf-of-st-lawrence-1.3144106>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Quebec First Nations take legal action against Belledune oil terminal

Ask New Brunswick court to quash construction permit issued to Chaleur Terminals Inc., cite failure to consult

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 07, 2015 1:09 PM AT Last Updated: Jul 07, 2015 2:21 PM AT



Chaleur Terminals purchased 250 acres of land from the Port of Belledune last year, and plans to begin construction at the end of 2015. (Bridget Yard/CBC)

Mi'gmaq communities in the Gaspé region have taken legal action against the New Brunswick government and Chaleur Terminals Inc., in a bid to halt construction of an oil terminal in Belledune, N.B.

Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation and the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat filed a notice of application with the Court of Queen's Bench in Campbellton, N.B., on Monday.

They are seeking to quash the approval to construct permit, environmental approval permit and site approval issued to Chaleur Terminals by the New Brunswick Department of Environment earlier this year.

The band and not-for-profit corporation allege the provincial government has breached its "ongoing duty to consult and to seek to reach a reasonable accommodation with the applicants," according to the court documents.

They want the court to issue an order prohibiting the government from issuing any further permits, approvals or authorizations to Chaleur Terminals "until such time as the province of New Brunswick has fulfilled its obligations to the applicants."

None of the allegations have been proven in court.

The New Brunswick government and Chaleur Terminals have not yet filed responses with the court.

Sacred duty to protect salmon

Troy Jerome, executive director of the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat, contends the proposed project is in violation of aboriginal title, rights and treaties.

He says his people have a sacred duty to protect the salmon in the Matapedia and Restigouche rivers, along which the oil would be carried in rail cars.

"Our people here fish salmon. If you look out on the river today, they're out there fishing salmon. It's our way of life. We've been doing that for thousands of years and we went and [did] what we had to do to defend our way of life in terms of protecting the salmon," he said.

'If there's even one rail tank that spills into that river, it's a lot more important to us than those 40 jobs.'- Troy Jerome, Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat

"We are one with the salmon. So the salmon [are] looking to us to protect them, and they provide us nourishment, so we have that kind of relationship, that direct relationship. And Chaleur Terminals right now, they're talking about a couple of jobs, even up to 40 jobs — if there's even one rail tank that spills into that river, it's a lot more important to us than those 40 jobs."

220 rail cars of Alberta oil daily

Chaleur Terminals, a subsidiary of Alberta-based Secure Energy Services, purchased 250 acres from the Port of Belledune last year. It plans to transport Alberta crude oil to Belledune by rail, for marine export abroad.

Construction is expected to start at the end of 2015 or 2016 and take about 18 months. Once complete, the project would see about 220 rail cars carrying oil to Belledune every day.

Jerome says people in the Gaspé area don't have much faith in CN Railway after upgrades earlier this year caused [irreversible damage to the local salmon population](#), according to anglers.

And he says efforts to discuss the project with the provincial and federal governments have so far not resulted in proper engagement.

In April, CN Railway dumped 6,000 tonnes of rocks on the side of its tracks to prevent erosion — and right into an important salmon breeding ground in the Matapedia River, causing irreversible damage, according to Quebec's Atlantic Salmon Federation.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) officials have said the rail company didn't respect its maintenance work permit when it dumped the rocks during an important time in the Atlantic salmon breeding cycle.

A total of 22 municipalities in Quebec have voiced opposition to Chaleur Terminals' project in Belledune.

Local politicians in New Brunswick, however, have said they welcome the estimated 200 jobs it will create during construction and 40 permanent full-time jobs once it's in operation.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/quebec-first-nations-take-legal-action-against-belledune-oil-terminal-1.3141269>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Canada rejects UN call for review of violence against aboriginal women

Mike Blanchfield

OTTAWA — The Canadian Press

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Last updated Thursday, Sep. 19, 2013 12:46PM EDT

Cuba, Iran, Belarus and Russia used a United Nations body Thursday to criticize Canada's human-rights record, as the Canadian envoy rejected calls to develop a comprehensive national review to end violence against aboriginal women.

Canada was responding Thursday to the UN Human Rights Council, which is conducting its Universal Period Review of Canada's rights record, on a wide range of issues from poverty, immigration, prostitution and the criminal justice system.

Countries have their rights records reviewed every four years by the Geneva-based UN forum, but the Harper government has been skeptical in part because it allows countries with dubious rights records to criticize Canada.

Canada's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Elissa Golberg, offered a brief rebuttal to Belarus, but did not engage directly with the other countries that criticized Canada.

"Canada is proud of its human-rights record, and our peaceful and diverse society," Golberg told the one-hour session.

While no society is entirely free of discrimination, she noted, Canada has "a strong legal and policy framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, and an independent court system."

Recommendations from those countries were among the 40 of 162 that Canada chose to reject.

That also included a rejection of a series of resolutions calling on Canada to undertake sweeping national reviews of violence against aboriginal women.

Golberg said Canada takes the issue seriously and that provincial and local governments are better suited to getting results on those issues.

The countries that called for a national review included Switzerland, Norway, Slovenia, Slovakia and New Zealand.

Other countries with poor rights records, including Iran, Cuba and Belarus, also supported the call for an investigation into the disappearances, murder and sexual abuse of aboriginal women in Canada.

In a response to be formally tabled Thursday in Geneva, Canada says it is "strongly committed to taking action with aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups to prevent and stop violence against aboriginal women" through a series of federal and provincial initiatives.

"There have been a number of inquiries and resulting proposals for improvements over the years," says the reply.

“In addition, race-based statistics are not recorded in a systematic manner across Canada’s criminal justice system due to operational, methodological, legal and privacy concerns.”

Canada faced similar calls to better address the concerns of its aboriginal population in 2009, when it faced its last review by the UN body.

“Such comments were made by a range of states, some of them close allies, some not. For example, the United Kingdom, Norway and the Netherlands, as well as Cuba and Iran, recommended that Canada better address Aboriginal Peoples’ concerns,” said an April 2013 Library of Parliament review of the UN review process.

The issue reared its head again in February when the New York-based group Human Rights Watch issued a highly critical report alleging police abuse of aboriginal women in British Columbia.

It too urged the Harper government to strike a national commission of inquiry along with the B.C. provincial government, a measure that was endorsed by the NDP, Liberals, the Green party and the Assembly of First Nations.

James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, is scheduled to visit Canada in October to conduct his own inquiry.

The federal government will get a chance to respond to Anaya’s findings before a final report is circulated and presented to the UN rights council.

The Harper government has butted heads in the past with previous UN special rapporteurs.

Conservative cabinet ministers have blasted the UN’s right-to-food envoy Olivier De Schutter for saying too many Canadian citizens are going hungry.

It is all part of a periodic war of words between the Harper government and various UN bodies. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has criticized a Quebec law on demonstrations, prompting a quick response from Ottawa.

The UN Committee Against Torture has also accused Ottawa of being “complicit” in human rights violations committed against three Arab-Canadian men held in Syria after 9-11.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-to-reject-un-panels-call-for-review-of-violence-on-aboriginal-women/article14406434/>

Nellie Angutiguluk, Inuk woman killed in Montreal, remembered as kind, generous soul

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 3, 2015 | Last Updated: July 3, 2015 9:35 PM EDT



Nellie Angutiguluk died May 18, 2015. Her slaying was Montreal's 13th homicide this year. SPVM

From the outset, Nellie Angutiguluk's death didn't seem to make sense.

The 29-year-old had struggled with addiction and she'd lived in chronic poverty for years but when police found her body in a Côte des Neiges apartment on May 18, it came as a shock to the people who knew her.

"We'd all heard it was an overdose," said Mark, a friend of Angutiguluk's who did not want his name published. "I'd seen her sniff stuff and smoke stuff but never with a needle in her arm. So it didn't really add up but people were saying overdose."

But doubts began to surface as time went by and neither the police nor the coroner's office shared information about the cause of her death. Angutiguluk's family lived 1,600 kilometres north in the Inuit fishing village of Puvirnituq so it was up to her adopted

Montreal family — a community of poor Inuit men and women as well as social workers who came across Angutiguluk on a weekly basis — to organize a memorial for her. While putting the service together, Caleb Clark says he decided to try to wring something out of the police one last time.

“I hadn’t heard of any ailments or any enemies of Nellie whatsoever, so her death was very surprising,” said Clark, who runs the Open Door shelter out of an Anglican Church on Dorchester Blvd. “But then the police let me know they were doing the autopsy and there were some potential things they were looking at.”

On Thursday — six weeks after her death and just a month after her sparsely-attended funeral service — police confirmed that Angutiguluk was murdered and asked for the public’s help for information about her.

“It haunts me, to think about her going that way,” said Mark, standing behind a bus shelter outside the Open Door. “I keep going over it in my head, wondering if she was being abused, wondering what could have caused this.

“She was a friend of mine, she was generous, she shared whatever she had,” he continued. “I used to ride the bus back to LaSalle with her when we both lived on Newman (Blvd.).”

None of the people who spoke to the Montreal Gazette could say why Angutiguluk left her village to come to the city four years ago. Most Inuit who come to Montreal do so to access health services, attend school or are lured by career opportunities. But there are those who come south to escape something.

“You have some of the worst overcrowding in Canada happening in those villages, sometimes as many as 18 people living in a three-bedroom house,” said Clark, who works with Montreal’s itinerant Inuit population. “A number of women are escaping violent relationships, issues of sex abuse or physical abuse. When you have rampant poverty and overcrowding, violence often comes with the territory. And so they come down to Montreal quite often to escape that.”

The problem is that sometimes the troubles women evade upon leaving the north are waiting for them when they arrive in Montreal. Combined with the culture shock of moving from a village of maybe 1,500 residents to a metropolis, the Inuit face long-standing and systematic prejudice.

“A landlord called us today and flat out said he will not rent apartments to Inuits,” said Tina Pisuktie, who works at Chez Doris, a women’s shelter that Angutiguluk visited. “That kind of thing happens a lot when we try to find housing for these women. This city isn’t always a welcoming place (for Inuit women) but they’re resilient and they keep pushing forward ... Nellie (Angutiguluk), she was a quiet, kind, sweet individual. Maybe a bit naive and maybe she fell in with the wrong crowd but she was a good person. It hurt everyone to hear that she was killed, it rattles you to hear that.”

Clark said she came to the Anglican Church regularly to pray and seek religious counsel. She had two children and, in the weeks before her death, Angutiguluk’s mom flew into Montreal and stayed with her.

“They had some good bonding time,” Clark said. “Finding out about the homicide ripped open a wound in this community ... But it would be wrong to think of (Angutiguluk) and

the women who come to Montreal as victims. Just the notion of getting on that plane and leaving the only community you've ever known to strive for something better, that right there takes a lot of courage. And sometimes it's women who leave their entire family behind just with the hope of something better."

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/nellie-angutiguluk-inuk-woman-killed-in-montreal-remembered-as-kind-generous-soul>

Focus on 'family violence' in cases of missing, murdered aboriginal women misguided

Closer look at RCMP report that put the onus on families, aboriginal communities reveals more complex picture

By Andrew Kurjata, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 08, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 09, 2015 11:19 AM ET



A woman holds a sign as hundreds of people march through the Downtown Eastside during the 25th annual Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, B.C., on Saturday February 14, 2015. The march is held to honour missing and murdered women and girls from the community with stops along the way to commemorate where women were last seen or found. (Darryl Dyck/Canadian Press)

Last month, RCMP delivered an update on missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada, a report that led many to put the onus for reform on aboriginal families and communities.

"Our 2015 update confirms the unmistakable connection between homicide and family violence," said RCMP deputy-commissioner Janice Armstrong, speaking to the media after the report.

The RCMP report noted that victims "knew their killers" in 100 per cent of the solved homicide cases of aboriginal women in 2013 and 2014.

And at the news conference, police shared their efforts to raise awareness about family violence within aboriginal communities, including a public service campaign featuring country singer Shania Twain.

But while there is undoubtedly a link between family violence and missing and murdered women of all backgrounds, a closer look at the statistics and terminology suggest that policy makers and the news media might want to be more careful how they frame this important debate.

For example, the RCMP report says 32 aboriginal women were victims of homicide in 2013 and 2014, and victims knew their killer in 100 per cent of the solved cases.

That "100 per cent," however, leaves out at least six unsolved cases the Mounties cited in that period for which it is impossible to know at this point the relationship of the victim to her killer.

It also leaves out victims in cities and regions policed by forces other than the RCMP, such as the Toronto and Vancouver police departments. Had those areas been included, it would lead to a larger base that would likely skew the 100 per cent assessment.

More to the point, the police classification that these murdered women "knew their killer" does not mean that these women knew their killer well or intimately.

In fact, when you look into the categories more closely, the odds of family being involved actually decrease if the victim is aboriginal.

RCMP definition of 'knew their killer'

Between 1980 and 2012, 30 per cent of aboriginal female homicides involved what RCMP characterize as "acquaintances," which is defined as "close friends, neighbours, authority figures, business relationships, criminal relationships and casual acquaintances. (i.e. a person known to the victim that does not fit in the other acquaintance categories)."

In other words, a broad group of people that includes neighbours you might see taking out the trash, a grocery store clerk you might see on a weekly basis and, as was pointed out during the news conference, sex workers who "know" their johns.

In that sense, Natasha Montgomery and Cynthia Maas "knew" Cody Legebokoff, a serial killer who preyed on their vulnerable positions as sex trade workers in order to get drugs, before violently murdering them and disposing of their bodies.

Loretta Saunders also knew Blake Legette, a man who was subletting an apartment from her. Short on the money for rent, Legette opted to suffocate Saunders with a plastic bag and hit her head on the floor until she stopped moving.

Family violence greater factor in non-aboriginal homicides

After acquaintances, aboriginal women are most likely to be killed by spouses (past and present), family members, or what the RCMP calls "other intimates," so it does make sense for police to want to reduce violence in these categories.

However, it should not be implied that family violence is somehow unique to aboriginal communities as the numbers show it is more prevalent in non-aboriginal ones.

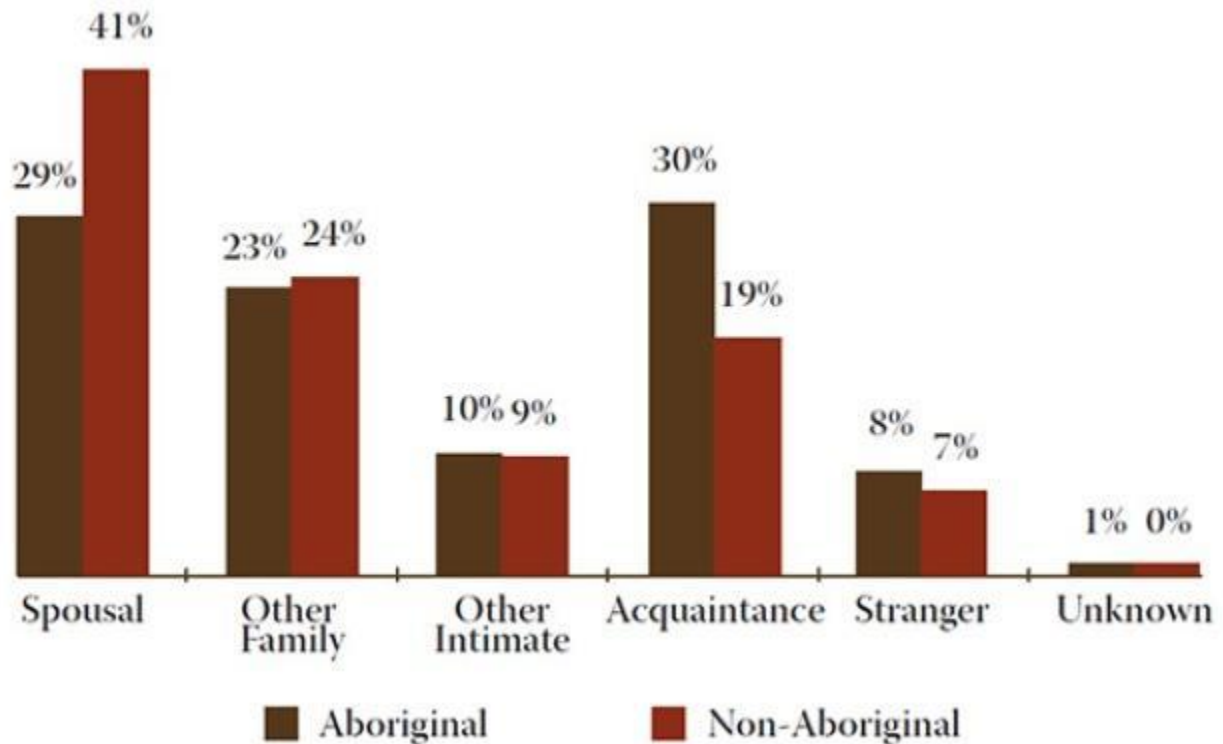


Figure 8 – Offender-to-victim relationship, female homicides, 1980-2012: From Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview (RCMP)

As the chart shows, between 1980 and 2012, 62 per cent of aboriginal women murders involved a spouse, family member, or "other intimates."

But that number increases to 74 per cent in the case of non-aboriginal female homicides.

Why this matters

Last year, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt told the Ottawa Citizen that aboriginal communities have to take a greater responsibility for missing and murder indigenous women in Canada.

"Obviously, there's a lack of respect for women and girls on reserves," he said. "So, you know, if the guys grow up believing that women have no rights, that's how they are treated."

These comments were made against the backdrop of calls for a national inquiry into the number of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada, something the federal government says it isn't interested in.

They can probably also be seen in the context of the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission report into residential schools.

It paints a portrait of intergenerational violence and trauma affecting aboriginal people across this country in myriad ways, and calls for a greater depth of understanding of the challenges involved.

The bigger picture

Aboriginal women are four times more likely to be killed than non-aboriginal women in this country.

Despite accounting for only four per cent of the population, they make up nearly 25 per cent of the female homicide victims in Canada.

Family violence is indeed part of that, but so, too, are killings by acquaintances and complete strangers.

All occur at rates far higher than what is faced by non-aboriginal women.

But when we frame the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada as a problem for individual communities and families alone, we may be in danger of missing the wider picture.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/focus-on-family-violence-in-cases-of-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-misguided-1.3140580>

Special Topic: Residential Schools & '60s Scoop

Farid Rohani: Truth and Reconciliation Commission findings offer opportunity to correct past wrongs

posted on July 3rd, 2015 at 6:55 PM



Approximately 150,000 First Nations children were taken away from their parents and sent to residential schools. Fallen Feather Productions

By Farid Rohani

Growing up, the phrase "lest we forget" was a call to never forget the sacrifices of the millions of people who died to prove that no race was superior to the other.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's recent findings proved the abuse of a segment of our population, creating disadvantaged First Nations communities. It's the complete opposite of what we hold solemn.

The disastrous wars and atrocities of the 20th century required us as Canadians to begin seeing ourselves as members of one country with the same laws and rules applied equally to all.

Unfortunately, Canada was initially built around the notion of survival of the fittest, where servants of the Crown—imbued with a European colonial attitude—exploited other races.

The class system was so layered that children of the well-to-do were six inches taller than those of the poor. For First Nations, the results of this class system were seen in education, health care, and the job market.

The Crown practised racial superiority. Anglo Europeans cited First Nations culture religion as a convenient excuse to abuse those they saw as lesser human beings.

We don't live any more with the ideals of European colonialists. Cecil Rhodes used to claim that the British were the best people in the world; the former viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, proclaimed that British ideals are an instrument for the good of humanity—and one must devote all energies in our lives to maintaining them.

Those notions have clearly been dismissed. We have matured as a country and as a people. New generations of Canadians from all backgrounds strongly reject the idea of the civilized versus the uncivilized. We don't accept that those from Europe are better than others and must get preferential treatment.

We must correct the wrong.

The rights of First Nations can be compared to the rights of women. A century ago, women were looked upon and treated as an inferior group. They were denied the opportunity to express their full potential and were lowered to the role of serving the needs of men.

We still see societies where women live with fewer rights than men. Globally, however, equality of the sexes has become an accepted principle and one has to go to the margins to find defenders of gender and racial superiority.

We must move with conviction and firm principle to do the same for our First Nations and accept them as equals in our society. And we must meet their educational requirements, health needs, and correct the wrongs of the past.

Our past dealings with the First Nations are tantamount to a disease. It survives among many as a social attitude and as an affliction in the eyes of a significant segment of Canadians.

We have yet to erase the dark past. Still, many First Nations people continue to suffer the effect of deep-rooted prejudices caused by false narratives.

We must fully implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and deal with past injustice through building a new vision of citizenship and relationships that bring relief to First Nations communities. We will continue to face injustice and oppression unless we do so.

We must collectively address this issue by working together from the grassroots to the top echelons of our governments, building the foundation of new institutions that will deal respectfully and equally with those who were oppressed. We must look to our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that core common element we share, in rejecting acts and actions that permitted exploitation of others.

All Canadians, regardless of background, must be looked as members of one nation. For it is through nurturing that view that we are able to rise above matters that divide us and work for the common good and a common future for a better country. We must make a conscious effort to break down the barriers that long divided us by our cultural and ethnic origins.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report makes recommendations that would see us go a long way toward righting the wrongs, dismissing once-held prejudices, and banishing false narratives and unfounded racial stereotypes, which would allow Canadians to paddle together toward a brighter future.

Farid Rohani chairs the Laurier Institution, a national nonprofit organization promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding. Follow him on Twitter [@faridrohani](https://twitter.com/faridrohani).

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/483261/farid-rohani-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-findings-offer-opportunity-correct-past>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Federal Way legislator explains why she voted no for Native American history requirement

by [RAECHEL DAWSON](#), Federal Way Mirror Reporter

Today at 9:00AM



Carol Gregory

In late July, social studies teachers across the entire state of Washington will be required to teach Native American history.

But before Gov. Jay Inslee signed Senate Bill 5433 into law on May 8, the bill that changed teaching Native American history as an “encouragement” to a “requirement” for schools was voted on by the Washington Legislature’s Senate and House chambers.

While the majority voted yes, seven senators voted no in March, and 22 House of Representatives voted no in April.

Among the representatives’ no-vote was Rep. Carol Gregory, a Democrat representing Federal Way’s 30th Legislative District.

“I voted for the amendment that also put tribes that were seeking federal recognition,” Gregory said, referring to requirements of the law that students learn about the closest federally recognized tribe in the region. “I now understand there is tribal politics involved. I looked at educating children.”

Gregory, a current Federal Way Public Schools board of education member and former president, was appointed to fill late Rep. Roger Freeman’s position in January after he was voted into office just days after passing away from cancer in late October.

With the thought that the Legislature could go back and expand the bill, Gregory voted no. But that’s not to say she was against the intent of the law.

“I thought the bill was a great bill, I just thought it didn’t go far enough,” she said.

Gregory said she grew up being taught by her father to be very respectful of tribal history and the community.

“To me, I have a passion around this,” she said. “I thought I was doing a good thing, I just didn’t know all the facts about why the bill was being introduced.”

The law will take effect July 24.

Because the law is based off of a 2005 law that “encouraged” Washington school districts to adopt a curriculum put forth by the Office of Native Education — a subset of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction — much of the curriculum planning is already done, according to Michael M. Vendiola, the program supervisor of the Office of Native Education.

But they still have to train teachers on that curriculum.

“We’re certainly making ourselves available,” Vendiola said. “The curriculum is available for free, so certainly school districts could take it and figure it out but a lot of our contracts are asking to provide training.”

The curriculum includes identifying federally recognized Native American tribes near or within schools districts.

According to the final bill report, school districts are then expected to adopt social studies curriculum about tribal history, culture and government of the nearest federally recognized tribe and work with the tribes to develop learning material.

School districts are also required to collaborate with tribe programs and “facilitate cultural exchanges,” while also emphasizing tribal government and history, statewide.

“We feel the inclusion of Native American history, culture and government is just a part of Washington state history and part of the education system,” he said. “It’s something that would naturally be included and that’s what we’re attempting to do, to utilize this program to train teachers.”

The expectation is that the next graduating class, 2016, will have learned some accurate Native American history, as teachers will begin to implement their teaching this fall.

Several Federal Way middle schools are named after Native American tribes or people (Lakota, Sequoyah and Sacajawea middle schools, to name a few), and the district is home to Native American students, too.

Of the 29 federally recognized Native American tribes in Washington, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and Puyallup Tribe are the closest to Federal Way. According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 0.8 percent, or 169 Native American students, in the school year 2013-14 attended school in the Federal Way Public Schools district. There were 22,461 students registered in 2013.

But Maxine Alexander, the school district’s Native American Education Program coordinator, said that number looks more like 500 as many students don’t check the Native American box when filling out demographic forms.

The Native American Education Program was developed in the Federal Way school district to help students and their families in the educational process.

The program’s goals are to improve Native American students’ academic success, increase knowledge of cultural values, traditions and contemporary issues and increase parental participation.

Alexander said for school district’s to get the Title 7 Indian Education grant, they need to count each Native American student in the program who has filled out a 506 form. The registration process is specific to the requirement of each tribe, such as a student must have a quarter blood or a descendent in the tribe.

Last school year, Alexander reported 343 students in the program and prior years reached up to 395.

“But there are a lot more students that self identify as native students,” she said. “Every year, we identify 550-600 students that are eligible.”

What may come as a surprise is most of Federal Way’s Native American students come from outside of Washington state.

Alexander said a federal policy called “relocation” pushed tribes off of their reservations to bigger cities, such as Seattle. Because of this, the tribes where students are from are pretty diverse. However, many, she notes, are from all over Alaska’s 266 tribes.

And making Native American history an “encouragement” to “requirement” was a no-brainer to Alexander.

“The true history of the United States and people will be told because, right now, it’s only maybe one page or two pages and the general population doesn’t understand the sovereign relationships between tribes and government,” Alexander said, adding that it’s often a misnomer that tribes get special hunting rights. “It’s not really special rights, these are treaty rights and I think that’s hard for the general population to understand because

they've never been taught the governmental relationships and how that plays into the Constitution and how it is written into the Constitution that treaties are the highest laws in the land."

Alexander said the Federal Way school district is already working on implementing the required Native American history curriculum and will be doing some district-wide teacher training as the start of school gets closer.

"It's a step forward for understanding and developing relationships," Alexander said of the law. "It's something that should have been taught all along."

For more information on the law or curriculum, visit www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd.

Direct Link: <http://www.federalwaymirror.com/news/311513611.html#>

First VA Native American Tribe Federally Recognized, Others Next?

Posted: Jul 02, 2015 9:31 PM MST

By Kody Leibowitz



Amherst County, VA - The first Native American tribe in Virginia finally got federal recognition.

It give a renewed sense of hope to other Native American tribes in Virginia, including the Monacan Indians.

The spiritual sounds of the Monacan Indian Nation aren't heard on this day. This day is observed silently for another tribe: the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.

"To me," says Monacan chief Dean Branham, "it's a great day in Virginia for all Virginia Indians."

The [Department of Interior granted federal recognition](#) to the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, a nation known for its ancestor Pocahontas, and the first tribe in Virginia to receive that designation.

Six others are hoping for the same federal status, including a tribe in our backyard.

"I would love to see it soon. It's just right now we're waiting on Congress," said Branham.

The six Virginian Indian Nations began seeking recognition through an Act of Congress nearly [two decades ago](#). The [House bill](#) states that the Tribe and its members "shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government", such as medical care, housing and education. Virginia Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner co-sponsor the Senate bill. Kaine shares in the sentiment, "Today's announcement is an important step toward righting this historical wrong."

It's a sentiment shared by late-Monacan chief Sharon Bryant and current leadership to fully recognize their 125-acres of land and 2,300 members.

"I will always until the end of my days fight for federal recognition, because it is our birthright," said Bryant in an interview with ABC 13 in 2011.

"It's owed to us," said Branham. "It's a right."

Besides federal spending for medical care, housing and education, this designation allows for the Pamunkey tribe to look at building a casino. According to the AP, however, the tribe says they have no plans for one. If Congress passes the bill to recognize the Monacans, casinos and gaming are prohibited.

More reaction is pouring in from state leaders on the historic decision. Gov. Terry McAuliffe weighed in with this.

"I want to congratulate members of the Pamunkey tribe on their tireless efforts to ensure that they receive the federal recognition that they deserve," read the governor's statement. "I look forward to continuing to work with this Administration and our Virginia Congressional Delegation to ensure that the six other Virginia tribes will soon receive the federal recognition that is long-overdue."

The Pamunkey tribe is now one of 566 other federally recognized tribes across the nation.

Full statement from Governor Terry McAuliffe on federal recognition to Pamunkey Indian Tribe:

"This is a historic day in Virginia. I want to congratulate members of the Pamunkey tribe on their tireless efforts to ensure that they receive the federal recognition that they deserve. I look forward to continuing to work with this Administration and our Virginia Congressional Delegation to ensure that the six other Virginia tribes will soon receive the federal recognition that is long-overdue. I hope this is a positive step in enacting the bipartisan Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act, legislation that would grant federal recognition to six Virginia tribes: the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock, the Monacan and the Nansemond. These tribes have received official recognition from the Commonwealth of Virginia but have not yet received federal recognition."

Full statement from U.S. Senator Mark Warner:

“I congratulate the Pamunkey Indian Tribe on finally receiving this long-overdue federal recognition. This historic milestone also reminds us of the work that remains before us to correct the injustices committed against Virginia Indian tribes. Senator Kaine and I will keep urging our colleagues in the Senate to pass our legislation to ensure that the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe--Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe also get the federal recognition that they deserve.”

Full statement from U.S. Senator Tim Kaine:

“I’m thrilled the Pamunkey will finally receive the federal recognition they deserve. Federal recognition both honors the Pamunkey’s identity and makes its members eligible for well-earned benefits including housing, education and health-care funding. The Pamunkey are the first Virginia Indian tribe to receive federal recognition, over 400 years after making contact with the first European settlers. Despite the integral role the tribes played in American history and the unique cultures they have continued to maintain for thousands of years, they have faced barriers to recognition due to extraordinary circumstances out of their control. Today’s announcement is an important step toward righting this historical wrong, and I’m optimistic that the federal government’s decision to recognize the Pamunkey will spur Congress to act on our bill that seeks long-overdue recognition for six other Virginia tribes - the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock, the Monacan and the Nansemond.”

Direct Link: <http://www.wset.com/story/29467472/first-va-native-american-tribe-federally-recognized-others-next>

A Workshop Gathers Digital Activists Revitalizing Indigenous Languages in Colombia

Posted [3 July 2015](#) 13:57 GMT



Participants of the Gathering of Indigenous Language Digital Activism held in Bogotá, Colombia, 18-19 June.

Colombia's cultural diversity is reflected in its rich linguistic heritage, represented by more than 60 indigenous languages. While some languages are critically endangered, many others are alive and well.

Spoken by approximately 1 million people across the country, these languages can be found in classrooms, markets, public transport, and on the Internet. Societal pressures and the historic relegation of native languages — not only in Colombia, but throughout Latin America — have discouraged many from maintaining their mother tongues, but young people are leading a revival of sorts, advocating their language and culture through the use of easy-to-use digital tools and web platforms. These “digital activists” are at the center of this movement whose mission is to ensure that the next generation can find their language and culture reflected on the web.

Over the course of two days on June 18-19, 15 participants from across Colombia gathered in the country's capital Bogotá for the First Gathering of Indigenous Language Digital Activists. Following the success of [a similar gathering held in Oaxaca, Mexico](#) in October, this event provided an interactive space where young indigenous Internet users actively revitalizing their native languages could meet to learn from one another.

The gathering was co-organized by Global Voices through its [Rising Voices](#) initiative, as well as the research group [Muysccubun](#) and the [Caro and Cuervo Institute](#), which served as the event's hospitable hosts. [Wikimedia Colombia](#), [Mozilla Colombia](#), and [Ubuntu Colombia](#) were also on hand as local partners, leading workshops and providing

mentoring to the participants wishing to start new projects or improve on existing initiatives. The gathering was also made possible in part through the support of [Hivos](#).

Participants

In mid-May, we published an [open call for participation](#) seeking interested individuals already working to revitalize their native languages through Internet-based tools. Participants were selected with geographic and linguistic diversity in mind, as well their commitment to sharing what they would learn with their own communities.



Ever Kuiru (right) shows Deiver Edison Canticus and Yeraldin Domico the website to his digital project.

Applications arrived from throughout the country showing an impressive background in community-based projects, including online radio broadcasting, blogging, social media promotion, online dictionaries, and online children's games. Following a

review, the organizing team selected 15 people to take part. A complete list of participants and their respective communities and languages can be found [here](#).

Plenary sessions, workshops, and public events

Selected participants were invited to lead workshops or discussions, with the idea that each session be more conversation-like in nature. During the plenary sessions, facilitators introduced a topic including some broad general questions for the group to spark a conversation among everyone based on their local perspectives and personal experiences.

These sessions included discussion of technical hurdles when using native languages on the web, such as lack of keyboards to type necessary characters. The ongoing lack of connectivity in many communities is also a major obstacle for communities to become more active in this work. Another challenge discussed was the lack of consensus on writing methods within participants' communities and methods of building a uniform alphabet.

Participants also shared their views on whether to borrow words from Spanish when their language lacks a word for technology-related terminology. Some were adamant that neologisms should be created to accommodate these needs demonstrating that the language can be fully functional on its own. Another discussion centered on community rights to the content that is uploaded to the Web — whether digital activists need to ask permission from elders or leaders and in what circumstances, and how open licenses might figure into the equation.

The final discussion focused on ways to build alliances among different stakeholders that would ensure more successful language revitalization projects. Many participants requested a greater presence from governmental authorities at the workshop, so they could directly advocate their communities' language preservation and revitalization needs.

Based off feedback collected after the Mexico workshop, participants had additional time allotted to formally present their digital project to the entire group.



Jhon Alexander Delgado shares his digital project with the group.

Hands-on workshops led by participants and local partners were another major component of the gathering. Workshops included recording and editing with the [Audacity](#) software; how to start a free software localization project; creating memes using the [Webmaker](#) tool; how to edit a Wikipedia article; and how to maximize Twitter to create conversations around a specific hashtag. The hashtag used for the event was [#ActivismoLenguasCO](#).

Due to high demand, a [roundtable discussion](#) called “Internet in My Language — Experiences of Colombian Indigenous Language Digital Activists” took place the following Saturday morning. Free and open to the public, the event was an opportunity for workshop participants to interact with the general public to help raise awareness about the topic.

Building upon the network

The two days were packed with a wealth of information and skill-building. During the final wrap-up session, many recommended that future sessions be longer for more in-depth engagement with digital tools and topics. According to participants, two days were not nearly enough time to reflect on the many challenges facing indigenous language digital activists in Colombia. In addition, the wide variety of digital tools was at times overwhelming, so additional time with fewer tools was also suggested.



Group discussions during the workshop.

Most importantly, participants reiterated their own personal commitment to their projects. They also expressed their desire to replicate the workshop model on a local level and virtually connect with other communities across the region, such as those that took part in the Mexico gathering.

Earlier this year, Rising Voices launched ActivismoLenguas.org, a portal to document and feature indigenous language digital activism projects across Latin America. The site hosts project profiles, video interviews with the participants from Mexico, and video interviews with the Colombia participants will be shared there soon — all made possible through a collaboration with linguistics students at the Colombian National University. This network, which started in Oaxaca, has already added new members from the Colombia workshop.

These gatherings demonstrate that innovative work is taking place on a grassroots level, but there is still need for technical, linguistic, and community support. The challenge remains finding meaningful ways to connect these young indigenous language digital activists. Building a network with them is a step in the right direction.

Global Voices hopes to continue to replicate this model in other countries in the region by facilitating partnerships with local organizations that share this common mission furthering the impact of the work of these young digital activists.

Direct Link: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2015/07/03/a-workshop-gathers-digital-activists-revitalizing-indigenous-languages-in-colombia/>

South Dakota man must pay \$1,000 fine for taking Native American artifacts

By [Forum News Service](#) on Jul 3, 2015 at 9:42 p.m.

MOBRIDGE, S.D. -- A Mobridge man has been sentenced to pay a fine of \$1,000 and serve a year of probation after admitting to taking Native American artifacts from public lands along the Missouri River in far north-central South Dakota.

Carl Overbey, 40, was also ordered by U.S. Magistrate Judge William Gerdes last week to turn over the illegally taken artifacts.

Acting South Dakota U.S. Attorney Randy Seiler said Overbey was charged with excavation of archaeological resources. Seiler said the Walworth County sheriff last fall seized a collection of artifacts from Overbey that he said he collected from the Revheim Recreation Area south of Mobridge and the Point of View area north of Mobridge, both along the river. Also in the collection were two illegal eagle bone whistles.

Direct Link: <http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/region/3779345-south-dakota-man-must-pay-1000-fine-taking-native-american-artifacts>

Barbecue is an American tradition – of enslaved Africans and Native Americans

[Michael W Twitty](#)

The traditional holiday cookout has its roots in the cooperation between black and indigenous peoples struggling to get or keep their freedom from colonialists



Nigerian style barbecue held in Kensington on 19/05/01 Photograph: Andy Hall for the Observer

Saturday 4 July 2015 12.00 BST Last modified on Sunday 5 July 2015 22.56 BST

[Barbecue](#) is a form of cultural power and is intensely political, with a culture of rules like no other American culinary tradition: sauce or no sauce; which kind of sauce; chopped or not chopped; whole animal or just ribs or shoulders. And, if America is about people creating new worlds based on rebellion against oppression and slavery, then barbecue is the ideal dish: it was made by enslaved Africans with inspiration and contributions from Native Americans struggling to maintain their independence.

The common cultural narrative of barbecue, however, exclusively assigns its origins to Native Americans and Europeans; the very etymology of the word is [said to derive from both Carib through Spanish](#) (*barbacoa* – to roast over hot coals on a wooden framework) or from western European sources (*barbe-a-queue* in French – “head to tail” – which fits nicely with contemporary ideas of no-waste eating and consuming offal). Some American barbecue masters have taken to attributing the innovation of barbecue to their German and Czech ancestors.

If anything, both in etymology and culinary technique, barbecue is as African as it is Native American and European, though enslaved Africans have largely been erased from the modern story of American barbecue. At best, our ancestors are seen as mindless cooking machines who prepared the meat under strict white supervision, if at all; at worst, barbecue was something done “for” the enslaved, as if they were being introduced to a novel treat. In reality, they shaped the culture of New World barbecuing traditions, from jerking in Jamaica to anticuchos in Peru to cooking traditions in the colonial Pampas. And the word barbecue also has roots in West Africa among the Hausa, who used the term “babbake” to describe a complex of words referring to grilling, toasting, building a large fire, singeing hair or feathers and cooking food over a long period of time over an extravagant fire.

In the earliest colonial days, the West Indies served as a seed colonies for the presence of enslaved Africans in the New World especially because, within 10 years of European arrival, indigenous Americans endured mass, genocidal losses due to the introduction of diseases common in Europe. With only a few remaining Carib and Arawak indigenes, Africans quickly became the majority on the islands and, eventually, the Southeastern coast (where many island colonists resettled in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, often with their enslaved people in tow).

In Jamaica, [maroon rebels who resisted slavery](#) and formed their own settlements forged ties with rebellious indigenous islanders in the West Indies and Latin America (leading, eventually, to the modern form of barbecue known as jerking). Similar ties were established in the first areas of the United States to see the arrival of enslaved Africans, which occurred in 1526, after Spaniard Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon [died in an effort to establish a colony](#) in what we know now as South Carolina. Ayllon’s political successors abandoned the area, leaving behind the enslaved Africans and the Native Americans who had guided them there. With the Spanish had come pigs, which became feral and to this day infest Southern woodlands. It was in that context that barbecue made its debut on what is now American soil.

Enslaved Africans and Native Americans had a lot in common, culinarily-speaking: they had been cooking and eating in similar ways. despite an ocean between their civilizations.

It only makes sense that, when their foodways, crops, cooking methods and systems of preservation, hunting, fishing and food storage collided, that there would be deep similarities and convergences of technique, method and skill. And West and Central Africans had always had their own versions of the *barbacoa* and spit roasting of meat. While living in a tropical climate, salting, spicing and half-smoking meat upon butchering was key to ensuring game would make it back to the village with minimal spoilage. Festivals were marked by the salting, spicing and roasting of whole animals or large cuts of meat.

Thus, in colonial and antebellum North America, enslaved men became barbecue's master chefs: woodcuts, cartoons, postcards and portraits from the period document the role that black chefs played in shaping this very American, and especially Southern staple. Working over pits in the ground covered in green wood – much as in West Africa or Jamaica – it was enslaved men and their descendants, not the Bubbas of today's Barbecue Pitmasters, that innovated and refined regional barbecue traditions. If anything, German, Czech, Mexican and other traditions in South Carolina, Missouri and Texas were added to a base created by black hands forged in the crucible of slavery.

In some ways barbecue is true Independence Day food. As European Americans acclimated themselves to the custom of forsaking utensils and even plates to eat more like enslaved Africans and Native Americans – from spareribs to corn on the cob – they used their hands in an unprecedented break with Old World formalities. It is not without some irony that enslaved people, the earliest barbecue pitmasters, were called upon to avail slaveholders and politicians with Fourth of July barbecues meant to win over neighbors and constituents. When they obtained their own freedom, the formerly enslaved celebrated Juneteenth with none other than their favorite freedom food – barbecue.

Barbecue is now widely recognized as a staple of the American culinary canon – so much so that at least three national holidays (Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day) are associated with it. Barbecue is laced with the aspiration of freedom, but it was seasoned and flavored by the people who could not enjoy any freedom on Independence Day for almost a century.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/04/barbecue-american-tradition-enslaved-africans-native-americans>

Manning: 'Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness' Was Not Intended for Native Americans

[Sarah Sunshine Manning](#)

7/4/15

What exactly does “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” mean to a Native American?

As a teacher of high school tribal government, I am tasked with guiding students to think critically about this question, among many other provocative questions.

A typical high school government class is designed, in many ways, to accomplish two overarching objectives: 1.) to inform students about the overall United States governmental system (which should encourage them participate in American politics), and 2.) instill a sense of national pride. For Native students of U.S. government, accomplishing either objective is rife with complexity and contradiction, especially when it comes time to study the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of this “Great Nation.”

Here is the most celebrated line of America’s founding document:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

However seemingly profound the sentiment in this expression, it is impossible for a Native person studying the Declaration of Independence to overlook a phrase that comes later, referring to Native people as “merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.”

Loose translation: “Indians are savages who kill everyone in their path, and they do not stop,” or at least this is what the founding fathers wanted you to believe.

The fact that this anti-Indian sentiment was and still is published and circulated en masse, has sanctioned a collective disdain for the original people of this land, thereby justifying the destruction of the Indian race, the theft of Indian lands, and meanwhile, Americans pursue their own American dream.

For any student of colonial history and federal Indian policy, as my high school government students are, this statement alone of the “merciless Indian savage,” is among the greatest falsehoods ever told. But Americans bought it, and the political poison went down with ease.



Federal News

U.S. to assign 3,000 from military to fight Ebola

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration is considering...

Persephone Eastman, who is Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota and a government student, holds her government class notebook. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

Far too many Americans today still buy this prejudicial lie, because the most quoted and highly touted American document encourages them to. This racist lie is permeated by everything from white-washed American history books, to Hollywood Western films, Halloween costumes of the wild savage, racist Americana on store shelves today, and Indian mascots like the University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux. This lie justified centuries of oppressive federal Indian policy, forced removal, reservations, Indian boarding schools, the involuntary sterilization of Indian women until the 1970s ... the list goes on.

It becomes clear, then, that “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness,” was absolutely not intended for Native people. There is no way to gloss over this glaring truth, yet acknowledging this historical fact is immediately offensive to many Americans. But acknowledging this truth is necessary.

So, back to the objectives of a typical government class. How are native students expected to value, or at minimum, participate in, a political system that was built upon the continuous dehumanization and disenfranchisement of our ancestors? How is any truth-seeking human being expected to take pride in such a contradiction?

Clearly, it is much easier to take pride in one's nation if the shameful truths are ignored and swept under the rug. Out of sight, out of mind. But what also gets swept under the rug with the glaring truths of American colonial racism, is the prospect of native communities healing from centuries of historical trauma. There is no healing without first acknowledging the abuse. For America, this must happen collectively. Collectively acknowledging the racism of the Declaration of Independence is just the beginning.

Such shameless acknowledgement is a vital baby step toward not only a reconciliation of a strained and oppressive relationship between the United States government and tribal nations, but it is also a crucial step toward rightly living up to the lofty idealism that this nation boasts.

As an educator, I have the responsibility to purvey knowledge as accurately and objectively as possible. But aside from a strong understanding of factual information, I must also endeavor daily to instill my beloved students with an even stronger sense of hope. Fortunately, our ancestors have left behind the most compelling legacies of resilience to draw upon.

Past and present stories of strength inspire native students to look beyond the injustices of a nation built on their oppression, still with hopeful eyes set on the future. Native people have risen to the ranks of virtually every profession in America, infiltrating American systems in order to have their own influence upon them. Grass roots community efforts have maintained many treasured life ways and cultural teachings, even despite numerous efforts to erase them.

Native students who courageously face the bitter truths of this country's past are moved to create a better future for their children, as they have a firm footing grounded in truth, and an understanding of our present realities as a colonized but extremely resilient people. Armed with this compelling truth, they are all the more prepared to heal

themselves, their families, and their nations. This is the power of courageous education, and all Americans should be able to enjoy the benefits of our collective American truth.

Sarah Sunshine Manning (Shoshone-Paiute, Chippewa-Cree) is a mother, educator, activist, and an advocate for youth.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/04/manning-life-liberty-pursuit-happiness-was-not-intended-native-americans-160958>

The American Revolution's Losers Weren't All British

07.04.1512:01 AM ET

Pawns of the colonists, the British, and other colonial powers with a stake in North America, African American slaves and Native American tribes were often collateral damage in the war for independence.

The story of the American Revolution has been so often told that it's sometimes hard to believe there's anything new left to say.

Even those traditionally left out—women, Native and African Americans, the poor—have seen their lives folded into the revolution's history in recent decades. But in [*Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*](#), the historian Kathleen DuVal reminds us that all we have to do is expand the aperture a bit, to bring into focus the people living along the southeastern edges of the rebellious colonies, and an entirely new picture takes shape.

The mix of Indian nations, African slaves, and French, Spanish, and British colonists living in what is today Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana all played a critical role in the war, and yet, as the title of her book makes clear, independence for the 13 colonies was, for most these people, “independence lost.”

It's easy to forget that the American Revolution was hardly fought within the 13 colonies alone. It was truly a global war. By 1779, France and Spain had entered the war, allying with the rebels, in the hope that they could regain territory they had lost a little more than a decade earlier in the Seven Years' War. In that conflict, the British took much of France's and Spain's colonial lands.

In the southeast corner of North America, Spain had the most to gain if the patriots won with their aid: they could take back all of Florida, and perhaps even part of Britain's nearby Caribbean colonies. Yet standing in the way were two highly unpredictable groups: Native Americans and slaves. One of the great achievements of DuVal's book is to show just how dependent the war's outcome was on them both.

The story of Payamataha, the leader of the Chickasaw nation, provides a lucid illustration. Because Payamataha had allied with the British in the previous war, the British simply assumed he would do so again when the war of independence erupted. But after decades of fighting, Payamataha wanted peace. As a result of trade and treaties he helped secure in the 1760s, the Chickasaw population had finally begun to grow. For

Payamataha, it was only logical to stay neutral. And yet the British were shocked when, in 1777, he refused to rally Chickasaws to defend Natchez, then a part of British West Florida, from a patriot invasion. Though short-lived, the patriots' seizure of Natchez was an early warning to the British: if they didn't work to gain allies in the southeast—Natives, Africans, even their own colonists who chose not to rebel—they might lose all their American colonies together.

The British found more success with the Creeks, who lived along the border of present-day Alabama and Georgia. Led by Alexander McGillivray, the son of a Creek mother and Scottish father, the Creeks saw a British alliance as their best option. Ever since the Seven Years' War ended in 1763, Georgian settlers had been trying with limited success to push westward into Indian territory, with only British authorities working to restrain them. Indeed, Native American nations all along the Mississippi River believed a British victory would prevent any further expansion. McGillivray had personal reasons for siding with the British, too: Patriots had seized his family's Georgia plantation because of their tepid support for independence; joining the British was payback.

For most of the region's slaves, the question of whether to join the patriots, the loyalists, or stay neutral had no simple answer. And the answer changed dramatically as the war went on. Early on, fighting for British may have seemed the best choice: in 1775, the royal governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, made the surprising move of offering freedom to any slave who fled a patriot-owned plantation and fought for the British. But DuVal reminds us that, for slaves, individual freedom carried tremendous trade-offs, particularly the loss of one's family. Even after the British military extended Dunmore's offer to Georgia's slaves in 1778, the same drawbacks remained: only men of a certain age could fight—but what would happen to their families? And what if the British lost?

In the southeast, Spain's comparatively less onerous system of slavery further complicated slaves' options. Under slave law in Spanish Louisiana and the pre-British Floridas, slaves could sue their owner if they violated Spain's relatively more protective slave laws; they could also fix a price to buy their own freedom. Nor was the British offer of freedom for service novel—Spain had been doing the same for decades. As a result, when Spain formally entered the war on the patriots' side, it was anyone's guess what slaves would do.

To illustrate some of the decisions slaves made, DuVal has done a remarkable job finding stories like the one of Petit Jean, whose work for Spanish forces was critical to the patriots' success. Jean had lived as a slave in Mobile, part of West Florida, long before the British took it from Spain in 1763. His knowledge of the British and Spanish slave systems may have made him less quick to jump on the British offer of freedom for service. Instead, when the Spanish seized Mobile in 1780, he began acting as a courier for Spanish troops. Like other slaves in the region, he may have used the rival British offer of freedom as leverage against the Spanish. Jean not only got Spanish authorities to guarantee his freedom in 1782, but also the promise that he could buy his wife's freedom, too.

When the Spanish seized Pensacola, the capital of West Florida, in 1781, slaves like Jean played an important role, either as military aides or as labor used to pave military roads. In fact, one of DuVal's more provocative claims is that the Spanish seizure of Pensacola should stand on par with the much better known patriot victory at Yorktown, Virginia,

the same year. We remember Yorktown as the last major patriot victory that forced Britain to the negotiating table, but DuVal argues convincingly that Pensacola should share that honor. Britain's surrender of Pensacola meant that they had actually lost a colony—West Florida—that had not even been in rebellion. When combined with Yorktown, the British realized they might as well “cut their losses and recognize American independence.”

Yet rather than celebrate the patriots' victory, DuVal underscores the tragedy. Even before the ink was dry on the Treaty of Paris that ended the war in 1783, tensions between the Spanish and the newly independent states emerged. Benjamin Franklin, acting as an American diplomat, helped negotiate a secret deal with Britain concerning West Florida's borders, cutting the Spanish out. For the next few decades, Spanish and American troops would engage in endless small-scale battles over those precise boundaries.

The United States took the same go-it-alone strategy in their negotiations with Indian nations, whether wartime allies or not. They simply handed them treaties that ceded thousands of acres, even when some of the Native American signatories had no diplomatic standing. When McGillivray told Americans that the Treaty of Augusta that Americans forced two Natives to sign lacked legitimacy, and after settlers began to occupy Creek lands nonetheless, McGillivray declared war. What's more, he got the Spanish to secretly funnel him arms, and then attacked the Chickasaws, led by the peacenik Payamataha, forcing them to take the Creeks' side.

McGillivray's war ended in a draw in 1787, largely because Spain shut off their arms supply. For a time, the Spanish believed they could use Native nations as proxy soldiers whenever they pleased. But ultimately both Natives and Spanish stood to lose. America's westward expansion was relentless; by 1803, Spain lost all of Louisiana, and two decades later, Florida. The Creeks lost yet another war against Andrew Jackson's troops in 1814, and soon all Natives in the region were forcibly removed when Jackson became president.

DuVal's larger argument is that America's war for independence ultimately created an entirely new kind of power dynamic in the region. Gone were the days when empires—British, French, Spanish, and Native American—worked in tandem, establishing mutually dependent alliances that, if always tense and uncertain, were still more stable than what the new American nation had in store. America's founding generation believed they could create a new kind of empire, in Jefferson's famous words, an “empire of liberty,” that could cut itself loose from the old dependencies on Native and European nations alike.

Not all the groups DuVal considers fit neatly into this schema. She suggests, for instance, that slaves ultimately had more independence within the slave systems of British and Spanish colonial rule than under the system that developed in the United States. Perhaps. But we should not forget that all the northern states enacted gradual emancipation laws during or shortly after the revolution; Congress forbade the entry of any new slaves in the northwest territory; and in 1782, even Virginia made it far easier for owners to free their slaves, with laws comparable to those in Spanish colonies. The revolution also inspired Haitian slaves to enact their own revolution, creating the first free black republic in the western hemisphere. Indeed, even as slavery grew more entrenched in the southern

United States, almost everywhere else—except in Spanish-ruled Cuba, and Brazil—blacks were winning their freedom.

Yet none of this detracts from what is ultimately a remarkable, necessary—and entirely new—book about the American Revolution. DuVal's history reminds us that if we celebrate a more inclusive vision of the United States this Fourth of July, one that seems ascendant these days, it is not the one the founding generation had in mind.

Direct Link: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/04/the-american-revolution-s-losers-weren-t-all-british.html>

In Ecuador, indigenous Christians not sold on pope visit

By Paola Lopez July 4, 2015 7:42 AM



Llamahuasi (Ecuador) (AFP) - Thirty years ago, Gustavo Negrete took his wooden cross and joined other indigenous Ecuadorans to greet Pope John Paul II. But he has no interest in seeing Pope Francis on Sunday.

Like a growing number of indigenous people in Latin America, Negrete has turned his back on the Roman Catholic faith that was violently forced upon their ancestors by Spanish conquistadors.

In his case, the 46-year-old Quechua became an Evangelical pastor.

Ecuador will be the first stop in the first Latin American pope's eight-day trip to the region, which will include visits to Bolivia and Paraguay.

While he vowed to bring a message of "tenderness" to historically excluded indigenous population who are victims of a "culture of waste," many have already lost faith in the Vatican.

When John Paul visited Ecuador in 1985, 94 percent of the population identified as Catholic. Today, 80 percent of the country's 16 million people are Catholic. Seven percent of Ecuadorans are indigenous people.

Negrete was 16 when he was among a group of Quechuas who welcomed the Polish pontiff three decades ago.

John Paul blessed his wooden cross, but Negrete ditched it for a protestant Bible in the early 1990s, giving up his dream of being a Catholic priest to become a pastor.

He now preaches in four temples of the Prince of Peace church.

Pope Francis "is going unnoticed today in indigenous communities," Negrete told AFP, as he held his Bible.

"The concept that we had in that era -- that a representative of God was coming -- no longer exists," he said.

- 'Estranged' from Vatican -

Every Sunday, Negrete drives his car along a steep road to Llamahuasi, an Andean mountain community some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Quito.

On a recent Sunday, the villagers welcomed him in a modest church with music, playing guitar and keyboards as a choir of women in white dresses and purple shawls sang in Quechua.

"Christ lives!" the faithful chanted, some with tears in their eyes.

Negrete said he gave up Catholicism when he realized that the church did not punish "drunkenness, the mistreatment of sons and wives" in indigenous communities.



A shirt portraying Pope Francis is seen in a shop in Quito on July 3, 2015 (AFP Photo/Juan Cevallos)

Memories of his father, who worked in a farm whose owners forced him to convert to Catholicism, also influenced his decision.

"To know that, while still believing in God, the Catholic church considered that we weren't people with souls, caused us to become suspicious, estranged," he said.

- 700 pastors vs 20 priests -

Ecuador and Bolivia lack official figures on the number of indigenous people who are Protestants.

But Manuel Chugchilan, president of the Feine organization that groups indigenous Evangelicals in Ecuador, said that the number of protestant churches soared from 40 in 1980 to 2,500 today.

He said Protestants reached areas where the Roman Catholic church was absent and gained the trust of indigenous people because of the "change of life" that they offered.

Alcoholism and violence have disappeared, while families prosper because they focus on their children's education, Chugchilan said.

Another telling figure is the number of pastors and priests.

While the Ecuadoran Episcopal Conference says that only 20 of 3,000 Catholic priests are indigenous, the Feine counts 700 pastors of native origin.

Father Marco Acosta, head of the Episcopal Conference's indigenous pastoral affairs, said that "many are in the Evangelical church more out of interest than conviction."

He said he hoped that the "figure of Pope Francis, his testimony, his simplicity, his message" will resonate with the indigenous population.

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/ecuador-indigenous-christians-not-sold-pope-visit-114211460.html>

The foodie traveller ... on the revival of Native American cuisine in Minneapolis

The Tatanka street food truck serves wild rice, cornflour cakes and wild greens using local, organic ingredients. Its mission is to redefine American food



Tatanka Food truck, Native-American cuisine in Minneapolis

[Johanna Derry](#)

Sunday 5 July 2015 07.00 BST Last modified on Monday 6 July 2015 18.56 BST

Travel across the US and the cuisine doesn't change much from state to state. It has a reputation for being sodium-filled, sweetened and glutenous (though, arguably, delicious) food. But chef Sean Sherman, known as the Sioux Chef, is hoping to redefine what we think of as "American" food.



Sean Sherman, the 'Sioux Chef'. Photograph: Johanna Derry

At his newly launched Minneapolis food truck [Tatanka](#), named after the American bison, dishes are made with ingredients that could be found living or growing locally before the arrival of European settlers. So you can forget processed sugars, wheat flour, beef, chicken and pork, Sherman serves wild rice and taco-style cornflour cakes with bison, turkey or rabbit, topped with wild greens and washed down with maple water. As well as being truly American, the food is super-healthy, organic – and local.

“We’ve worked with a couple of native-run farms to grow back some heirloom varieties of beans, squash, melon and corn,” says Sherman.

As well as introducing Minnesotan foodies to indigenous foods, the truck – which is supported by [Little Earth](#), an urban Native American community – will head out to reservations, too, to reintroduce native populations to the healthier diet of their ancestors.

Sherman hopes this will be not just a new culinary trend but the beginning of a resurgence in indigenous foods across the US: “It would be way more interesting if there were Native American restaurants everywhere so people could really experience the

regional foods of different areas, instead of just homogenous hamburgers and Coca Cola all the way across the country.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/jul/05/native-american-street-food-truck-minneapolis-us-foodie-traveller>

The Modernist View: Liberating Indigenous Peoples from Tradition and Culture

[Duane Champagne](#)

7/5/15

One of the most powerful forces arrayed against Indigenous Peoples are the forces of modernity. Many, if not most, people in the world are modernists of some kind. They believe the world is progressing, and through technology, education, health, and policy, the world can be made an increasingly better place to live.

The modernist view rejects tradition as old fashion and often harmful. The arguments that U.S. policy makers made about Indian people was they needed to be liberated from the constraints of tradition and culture, since those beliefs and lifestyles kept them in a state of bondage, poverty, bad health, and ignorance. Christian churches lobbied hard during the late 1800s to gain allotments of land for individual Indians, and turn them away from tribal collective identity, culture, and economy, in order to enable Indian individuals to take advantage of modern civilization. In this way, traditional tribal governments, cultures, communities, and economies were put to the side and abandoned. Treaties and indigenous self-government, collective land, and culture would no longer be required, and Indian people would be included in modern national economy, government, and life.

The rejection of termination policy during the 1950s is a benchmark event. Many Indians were willing to accept U.S. citizenship, but were not willing to give up Indian identity, self-government, treaties, land, and culture. The world has changed dramatically over the past centuries, and many Indian communities have learned to adapt. Left to their own ways, Indians would prefer their own cultures and nations. However, the world has become globalized politically and economically, if not, socially and culturally. Most Indian nations cannot live as they did two or three hundred years ago. The Indians that met the Puritans in the early 1630s are not culturally the same today, just as the Puritans not the same. Indigenous Peoples have learned to adapt, but they want to change in ways that make sense for themselves and their futures.

The diversity of indigenous cultures, institutions and histories makes it difficult to say there is a common pattern. There are diverse ways in which indigenous communities make accommodation to present-day nation state policies. Some examples are worth noting. Many U.S. tribes have taken up gaming as a way to enter the market. Gaming for most Indian nations, however, is a collective economic, if not political and cultural, enterprise where all members of the nation are equal shareholders. A tribal collective enterprise needs to make money, but the money is about upholding tribal government, community, and about sharing and maintaining collective ownership of assets. Each tribal

member gets an equal share, if there are any monetary distributions. Indian nations want to go into the marketplace as collective entities, and for the purpose of serving their tribal communities, and maintaining their tribal governments, land, and cultures.

Some nations, like the various Pueblos, do not want to separate government, community, and culture. In Acoma Pueblo, the governors are selected by a religious leader and the community is organized into ceremonially significant clans. Other Indian nations, especially those organized through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA), separate government and religion, but still maintain collective identity, and ceremonies are organized through community. Many Indian nations have always operated by community consensus, and often community remains more powerful than tribal government. For example, the IRA constitution of the Oneida of Wisconsin, has a general council composed of all adult members as the primary and most powerful governmental body. Similarly, in California, many of the tribal governments, despite bureaucratic and business corporate additions, have general community councils as their primary and most powerful political body. Many California general councils hold ultimate authority over management of collective social, political, and land interests as well as overseeing economic business and gaming enterprises. Indigenous nations are willing to address modernity, but in ways that preserve and maintain their collective political and cultural processes.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/05/modernist-view-liberating-indigenous-peoples-tradition-and-culture-160590>

SD Historical Society publishes biography on Red Cloud

The Associated Press
PIERRE, S.D.

The South Dakota State Historical Society has a new book out and it focuses on the only Native American leader who defeated the U.S. Army in a war.

The biography of Red Cloud examines the Oglala leader's rise to prominence, his struggle against cultural domination and the victory that closed the Bozeman Trail in 1868.

Jay Vogt is the director of the Historical Society. He says author John McDermott used little-known sources to explain Red Cloud's early childhood and worldview.

In "Red Cloud: Oglala Legend," McDermott chronicles Red Cloud's diplomatic trips to the U.S. Capitol and examines his vision for maintaining Oglala life and culture.

McDermott is a Rapid City resident, who served as a National Park Service historian.

The book is available at bookstores and online.

Read more here:

<http://www.thestate.com/entertainment/celebrities/article26528470.html#storylink=cpy>

Fake Cherokee?

July 6, 2015

By [Scott Jaschik](#)

When the scandal broke last month over Rachel Dolezal, the Spokane, Wash., NAACP leader and adjunct instructor of Africana studies at Eastern Washington University who apparently faked being African-American, there was [widespread discussion in academe](#). But Dolezal was not a major player in African-American studies.

The focus on Dolezal has renewed scrutiny of Andrea Smith, associate professor of media and cultural studies at the University of California at Riverside, who is being accused of faking a Cherokee heritage that many say she lacks. Smith, unlike Dolezal, is a prominent scholar. Her books are considered significant in Native American studies, and her writing and public appearances have routinely included references to her having Cherokee roots.

Smith's ethnicity also played a role in a tenure dispute. In 2008, the women's studies department at the University of Michigan (one of two departments in which Smith worked) voted against Smith's tenure bid there, but the American culture program (the other department in which she worked) backed the bid. Lack of backing from both divisions doomed her chances. In the ensuing protest, graduate students and others who supported Smith [accused the women's studies program of abandoning a talented minority scholar](#). Some say that Smith has since admitted to not being Cherokee (while the record on that is in dispute). But when her job was threatened, she allowed her defenders to point to her Cherokee status as a reason Michigan should have promoted her.

The reports about Smith are not new, and some in Native American studies report hearing about this possibility years ago. But a series of blog posts in the last week has focused renewed attention on the accusations that Smith has misrepresented her background.

The issue is both important and sensitive to many Native American studies scholars. Leaders in the field stress that they believe that outstanding scholarship has been done by people with a variety of backgrounds, Native American and other. But many also say that there is a particular obligation in this field -- when the number of Native American scholars with prominent university positions is so small and when Native Americans have been misunderstood by scholars for generations -- to be open about one's background.

"All scholarship should be based on integrity and that integrity includes honesty and transparency," said Winona Wheeler, president of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, associate professor indigenous studies at the University of Saskatchewan, and a member of the Fisher River Cree Nation. "One of the significant tenets of indigenous studies as a discipline is that we strive to [situate] ourselves with our research. So it's really important in the discipline that we advise our readers somehow about the place that we're coming from."

Smith did not respond to requests from *Inside Higher Ed* to requests on the controversy, and she has not commented in social media or elsewhere. Public support for her has not been visible.

'Andrea Smith Is Not a Cherokee'

Much of the information that has circulated about Smith has been summarized in a new anonymous blog called ["Andrea Smith Is Not a Cherokee."](#) The blog is a mix of examples of where she has described herself as a Cherokee and cases where she reportedly has admitted to people that she lacks evidence for this, or that she flat-out is not a Cherokee.

Many of her activities suggest that Smith is a minority woman and/or a Native American. She helped organize the group INCITE, which describes itself as "a network of radical feminists of color." She has been active in the group Women of All Red Nations. Her scholarship is about Native Americans (which of course doesn't mean she is one). Her best known book is *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Duke University Press).

For many of her campus appearances, she is described in ways that explicitly call her Cherokee. For an event at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she was called a ["Cherokee intellectual."](#) And for an event in May at Bridgewater State University, [the program](#) described her as a "Cherokee feminist." There are also videos of her being introduced at conferences as a Cherokee -- [this video shows her as that happens](#).

The problem, according to Smith's critics, is that she is not Cherokee and has known that for years. The blog and an article in [The Daily Beast](#) quote people as saying that they confronted her about her background and that, at various times, she pledged to stop describing herself as a Cherokee.

Steve Russell, an emeritus professor at Indiana University at Bloomington whose research is on Native American studies, is among those cited by the blog, and he confirmed to *Inside Higher Ed* that he received a direct promise from Smith to stop calling herself Cherokee. Russell described how he signed a petition on Smith's behalf when she was denied tenure at Michigan, but felt betrayed when he found out more. That's a common pattern among some of those who backed Smith in the past. Russell has [spoken out](#) at scholarly meetings about Smith's status.

Patti Jo King, interim chair of American Indian studies and director of the Center for American Indians at Bacone College and an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, also confirmed to *Inside Higher Ed* having discussions with Smith years ago in which Smith pledged to stop claiming Cherokee status. "But instead of coming clean and showing herself to be a true advocate for Native women, she continued her deception, proving to me that she is merely masquerading for money," King said. "She is not the first to do this -- indeed there are hundreds of 'pretend Indians' who use the guise to sell their 'authentic' books to an unsuspecting and naïve public. Although we have tried to enlighten the public for decades about our objections to kind of identity fraud, the pretenders seem to feel they have a perfect right to misrepresent themselves."

Does Ethnicity Matter?

While Smith's ethnicity (now disputed) was cited in debates about her employment at Michigan, she currently works in California, where the state Constitution bars public colleges and universities from considering race and ethnicity in hiring. A spokesperson for the university, asked about the controversy, said via email: "Professor Smith is a teacher and researcher of high merit who, on that basis, earned a tenured faculty position

at UC Riverside. The University of California is precluded by law from considering an individual's ethnicity in any hiring or advancement decisions."

While UC Riverside can maintain it doesn't care about Smith's ethnic status, other universities where she has worked have taken positions on the importance of accurate ethnic identities.

The American Indian Studies Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where Smith had a postdoctoral fellowship, in 2010 issued a statement called ["Identity and Academic Integrity."](#)

Robert Warrior, director of American Indian studies at Illinois, said that Smith didn't prompt the statement, but that the reports about her were "a topic of discussion throughout our development of it. We knew about the ethical issues regarding her claims to Cherokee descent at that point."

The Illinois statement said in part: "We recognize the importance of being able to identify ourselves clearly and unambiguously. Too often, we realize, American Indian studies as a field of academic inquiry has failed to live up to its potential at least in part because of the presence of scholars who misrepresent themselves and their ties to the Native world. While we do not in any way want to suggest that only Native scholars can do good scholarship in Native studies, neither do we want to make light of the importance of scholars who work in this field being able to speak with clarity about who they are and what brings them to their scholarship and creative activity."

Does Honesty Matter?

The new focus on Smith has prompted much discussion among Native American studies scholars.

Joanne Barker, an enrolled member of the Delaware Tribe and professor of American Indian studies at San Francisco State University, wrote [a blog post](#) comparing the Dolezal and Smith cases and the relative lack of attention (in the mainstream media) to the latter case. Within the field, Barker wrote, it is important to note that while many people didn't know about Smith until recently, many did. And she asked in her blog about the responsibility of those who knew -- even if they admired Smith's scholarship.

"There are certainly many people who knew/know, so why have her ethics and integrity not been questioned or challenged in the same or similar way to those of Dolezal?" Barker wrote. "Why does Smith's fraud get excused on the grounds of 'her good work' but Dolezal does not?"

Another piece attracting attention is by David Shorter, a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, about doing work on Native Americans while not being one. Shorter is a fan of Smith's scholarship, but says that misrepresentation matters.

"She has done incredible theoretical work in the academic field of indigenous studies and has even been recognized internationally for her broad and groundbreaking antiviolence coalition building. So does it matter that she did all of that in redface?" wrote Shorter in an essay in [Indian Country Today](#). "Yes, it does. Andy Smith did not just appear out of an egg, as a fully formed 'woman of color' advocate, validated as an indigenous scholar, and a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. She got there by grabbing the microphone, keeping others away from it and deciding to speak both 'as' and 'for' a group of people."

And there is no reason to have done so, Shorter said, noting that he is but one of many who, without being part of an Indian nation, have still managed to study Native Americans, build relationships in various tribes and be taken seriously by scholars of a range of backgrounds. How might Smith have pulled this off? The answer is in Shorter's headline: "Four Words for Andrea Smith: 'I'm Not an Indian.'"

Direct Link: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/06/scholar-who-has-made-name-chokeberry-accused-not-having-native-american-roots>

Healing Autoimmune Diseases the Indigenous Way

[Tessa Mychael Sayers](#)

7/6/15

The Beginning

My life started to unravel in 2008. I was tired, bloated, reactive to food, irritable, anxious, and at times depressed. From the outside, I had it all. Inside, I knew something was very wrong. Western doctors started their rounds of testing, but were dumbfounded. I took a workshop on naturopathic medicine and was mesmerized by what was considered an alternative form of healthcare, which is what I now call indigenous ways of healing.

Within 24 hours I completely changed my diet and lifestyle. I started seeing a naturopathic doctor. Many of my symptoms improved within months, but deep within I knew something still wasn't right. After a week-long 30th birthday binge eating celebration in 2012, I knew that my mystery issue was cyclical and dependent on the foods I ate, my sleep patterns, and overall emotional health. One month later I was diagnosed with three autoimmune diseases. I was crushed.

It's My Party and I'll Cry If I Want To

The Internet can be your best friend or worst enemy. For me it was the gateway to the future hell I thought my life would become. Autoimmune sufferers talked about their teeth falling out, their hair falling out, and in extreme cases death from complications. Many individuals diagnosed were over 45 and here I was at the exciting age of 30, believing all my dreams were over.

So what did I do? I had a party, invitation for one. Did I have a cry fest? You bet! I cried everyday—most often in the corner of my closet so my roommate wouldn't hear me. What if my disease got so bad I couldn't do art anymore, what if I have to quit my job because the fatigue gets too bad? Who would want to marry me like this? What if I slowly die?

Autoimmune is when your body gets confused and starts to attack itself, not only real foreign invaders, but the healthy tissues and organs. My body was so reactive, there were days when I couldn't get much food down. I would go to bed hungry. Other days I was too tired to care.

Getting Dumped

No I didn't get the boot from my man, my boyfriend at the time took a second job as my nursemaid even though I tried to convince him to leave me. Food broke up with me. I was told to cut out dairy, gluten, corn, soy, grains, sugar, coffee, and at one point fruit. It was easier to tell people what I could eat. I took the breakup hard, really hard. It was like seeing an ex three times a day.

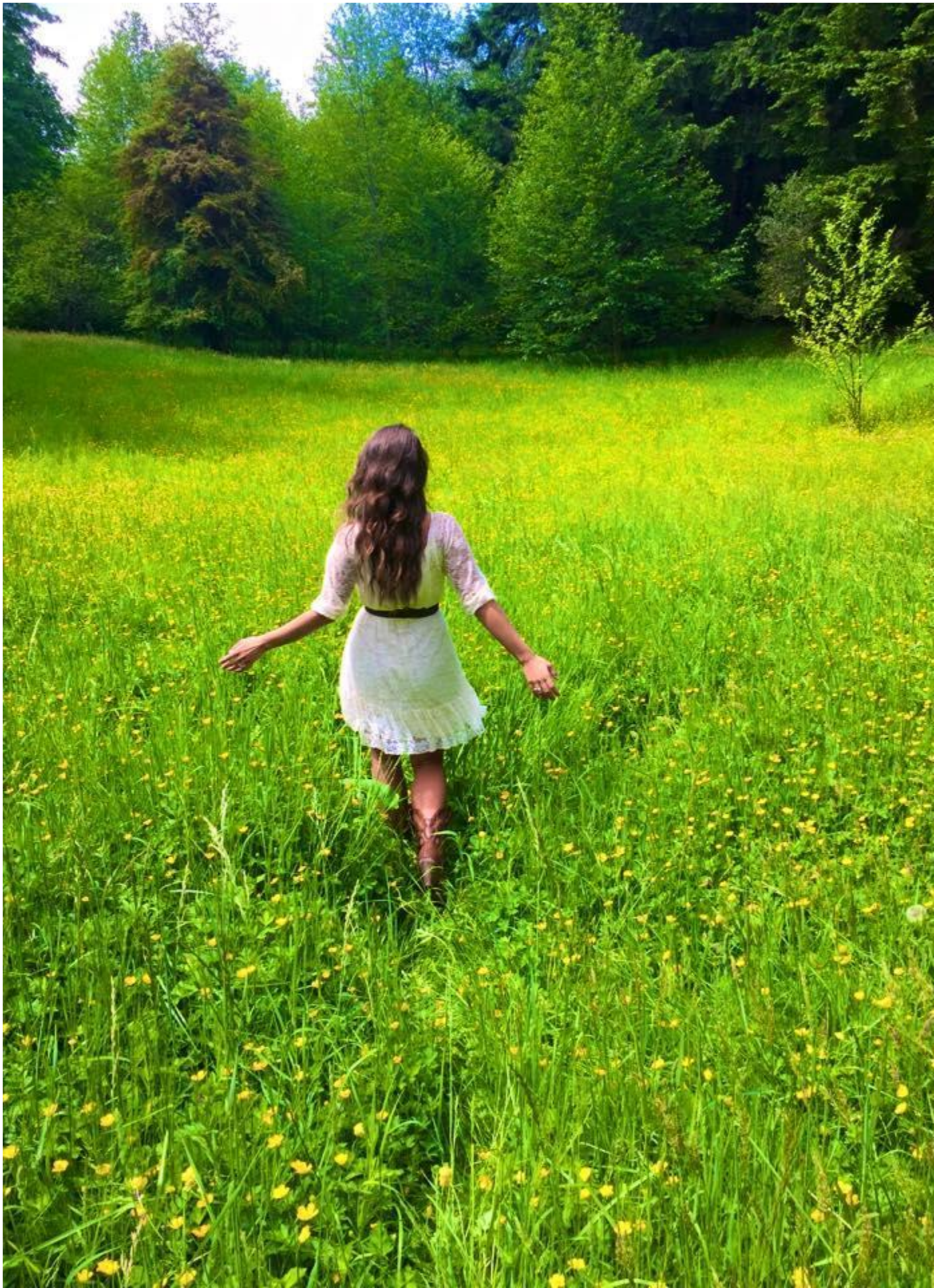
I isolated myself because I couldn't participate like other people my age. I was in full post food breakup depression without any comfort foods to make me feel better. Who wants to eat a celery stick mid meltdown? The disease was reeking havoc on my internal and external being. Looking at myself in the mirror became a painful ritual—I did just enough to be presentable. My hair started to thin, and that bothered me more than any other side affect of the disease.

One evening my boyfriend found me crying on the floor holding the hair straightener I had just broken—welcome to rock bottom. I looked at him and said: “Why do you love me, there isn't anything beautiful to love anymore.” Without hesitating he said “I love you for the person you are on the inside, and I still think you're beautiful.” I realized that I didn't really love myself. I didn't know how to accept the things about myself I wanted to change. It was then that I realized my disease was connected to the relationship I had with myself, which needed some serious nurturing.

Medicine Wheel

I was determined to get better. I have always been an overachiever, which ironically was part of my problem. My greatest strengths were also my biggest weaknesses. I refused any over the counter medication, which made people nervous, but I knew that healing wasn't going to manifest through quieting the symptoms. My body was screaming at me, and I was ready to listen.

At first I thought I could get my disease into remission through diet, exercise, and sleep, however my progress plateaued. I was then drawn to the Native American medicine wheel that balances the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of our lives. I was avoiding addressing the emotional issues in my life because lets be honest, that's uncomfortable. Who wants to enter those dark places we work so hard to control, ignore, or cover up with food or substances. My spirit said: “diet and exercise isn't enough, let's go there. You know you have to Tessa, and I know you're scared.” I went to that place. Many times. Traumas and emotions I never knew existed magically appeared during my inner work. I couldn't believe such things had been trapped within the walls of my body for so long. There were times I cried so deeply, I just knew I was releasing something profound, something that was begging to be let go.



Tessa has been healing the indigenous way, and you can too. (Tessa Mychael Sayers)

Healing

My life has dramatically improved since hiding myself in the closet with a celery stick. As challenging as living with a disease can be, it has brought many blessings to my life. I believe in the power of naturopathic medicine and holistic health care. The medicine wheel has become the foundation in which I keep exploring and fine tuning the various aspects in me that need attention. My physical space is strengthened through diet, sleep, hydration, and exercise. My emotional space is nurtured through journaling, music, poetry, art therapy, and yoga.

Mentally, I continuously challenge deep-rooted belief systems and replace them with beliefs that are in alignment with my true self. Spiritual space has been dedicated to a self-created sanctuary where I pray to creator, meditate, smudge, set intentions, and express daily gratitude. I take no prescription medications and strongly believe in the power to heal my disease through preventative and natural means. I eat organic food and wear organic makeup. And yes, it is expensive. Any excess income I have is gone. Would I rather be spending money on vacations and new clothes? Yes. Do I want a roommate? Not really, although she is awesome. My budget is tight, and that's because I have made a conscious choice to put my well being first. Any shot I have at pure remission is dependent on the work I put in everyday.

I have embraced the concepts of letting go, accepting, trusting, and forgiveness. I still have hard days—I sometimes cry. I am human, and I'm learning to accept that I don't have to be perfect. I believe that as I continue to work through my physical, emotional, spiritual and mental being, my disease will be something of the past. There are days when I don't feel well, which means I have to examine the world around me and inside me, and figure out what needs nurturing, what needs attention. I have more days that I feel amazing and grateful because I have truly gotten to know myself. I love myself more than I did 7 years ago.

You Can Heal Too

Lifestyle changes are overwhelming because they require us to explore the caverns within us that hold vulnerable wounds, many from childhood. They say belief systems take hold before the age of 7, and are reinforced by the environment around us. Emotions are energy, and energy cannot be destroyed. They hide and poison our beautiful bodies, creating stress, illness, and unhappy people. Until you dedicate time to exploring and processing trauma, it will keep you hostage. Reach out for support and surround yourself with those who encourage you to follow your own path. It takes great courage to look within.

Our society often looks externally for answers, validation, and for others to fill the voids within our hearts. The answers are always within you. When you take the time to heal and love yourself, you are not only giving yourself an amazing gift, but the people around you as well. If you ask yourself the right questions, you will find the answers, the willpower, and guidance to come back to the person you have always been. It is a journey of self-discovery that never ends. You will never be perfect. But I promise you will be happier, healthier, and more loving than you ever thought possible.

Tessa Mychael Sayers, Chippewa/Cree, has a Master's Degree in educational psychology. After serving the Native community as a high school counselor for three years, she is currently a merchandiser for Nike N7, which inspires and enables Native and Aboriginal youth to be more physically active. In 2012, she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and sjogrens that mimics the symptoms of lupus. Tessa enjoys painting, beadwork, graphic design, and is working on publishing a children's art therapy workbook helping youth process and release difficult emotions. She can be reached at tessa.mychael@gmail.com.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/06/healing-autoimmune-diseases-indigenous-way-160931>

Arizona lawsuit: Placement rules can harm Native American foster kids

3 hours ago • [By Howard Fischer Capitol Media Services](#)



Greg McKay

PHOENIX — A new lawsuit seeks to void provisions of federal laws which challengers say illegally place the desires of Native American tribes over the constitutionally protected best interests of children.

Attorney Clint Bolick of the Goldwater Institute filed the case on behalf two children with some Native American blood who currently are placed with non-Indian parents. Bolick said the Indian Child Welfare Act gives tribes pretty much unfettered authority to decide the best placement of children with links to the tribe, "even those who have never set foot on a reservation."

But Bolick is seeking class-action status for the lawsuit filed in federal court here, an action that could lead to overturning its provisions nationwide.

If a judge agrees, state child welfare laws would govern, laws which require courts to give prime consideration to the "best interests of the child." That would overturn existing requirements that strip state courts and the Department of Child Safety of their ability to decide placement of children who have Native American blood and essentially preclude non-Native families from adopting Indian children, even with the consent of biological parents.

But Bolick said the issue goes beyond where children can be placed.

"In Arizona, every child has the right to removal from a home where there are reasonable grounds to believe that protective custody will protect the child from suffering abuse or neglect — every child, that is, except a child that is deemed to be Native American," he said.

Bolick said the same disparity exists with laws in Arizona and elsewhere that entitle children to be placed in foster care that will be in their best interests.

"State child welfare laws whose interests are centered on the best interests of the child are forcibly displaced and commandeered by federal law that subjects Native American children to adverse treatments solely because of their race," he said.

Named as defendants are the top officials at the Department of Interior and its Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as Greg McKay, head of the state DCS. Bolick said that is because McKay is required to ensure this agency complies with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Direct Link: http://tucson.com/news/state-and-regional/arizona-lawsuit-placement-rules-can-harm-native-american-foster-kids/article_792ee698-24d2-11e5-9fef-ef1d3957fb2b.html

Native Americans protest proposed Arizona copper mine

By David Schwartz 21 hours ago

PHOENIX (Reuters) - Members of a Native American tribe in Arizona took to the roadways on Monday to protest against a proposal for a massive copper mine at a small town east of Phoenix, vowing to protect sacred lands.

A small group from the San Carlos Apache tribe began a scheduled cross-country caravan to Washington, D.C., to try to persuade the U.S. Congress to save an area known as the Oak Flat campground near Superior, Arizona.

The several dozen protesters hope to garner wide public support and get lawmakers to repeal a land exchange signed last year that paves the way for a \$6 billion project by Resolution Copper Mining, a company jointly owned by Britain's Rio Tinto and Australia's BHP Billiton Ltd.

"This is sacred land to us and what they are doing is a betrayal," tribal elder Sandra Rambler said in a telephone interview from the caravan. "It's like someone ripping the guts out of you right when you're standing there. We will not sit still and allow this to happen."

Mine supporters tout its expected benefits, including about 3,700 jobs and \$60 billion in economic impacts.

Project spokeswoman Jennifer Russo said the company was committed to involving tribal members and has reached out to "open the lines of communication and work cooperatively to address the issues."

The battle lines were set in December when President Barack Obama approved the exchange of 2,400 acres (970 hectares) deemed sacred to Native Americans and precious to environmentalists.

The exchange was tucked into a defense spending bill and supported by members of Arizona's delegation including former Republican presidential contender John McCain, who called the bi-partisan bill a "game-changer" for the area.

He also said in a statement last month that no tribal land or land designated as sacred by the U.S. Interior Department was involved and that the legislation includes key concessions to address opponents' concerns.

Organizers said plans call for the caravan to stop at Native American reservations nationwide, adding to its ranks along the way. The goal is for 1,000 people to descend on the lawn in front of the U.S. Capitol on July 21, Rambler said.

"We're the first Americans, and our voices need to be heard and they will be heard," she said.

(Editing by Cynthia Johnston and Eric Walsh)

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/native-americans-protest-proposed-arizona-copper-mine-232309861--finance.html>

Mayor of Whitesboro, N.Y., Insists This Village Seal Is Not Racist

By [Jackson Connor](#)

Tuesday, July 7, 2015 | 3 hours ago



In the weeks following the mass shooting at a historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina, there has been a debate in this country surrounding the prevalence of the Confederate flag in certain regions of the U.S. On Monday, the South Carolina Senate [voted 37-to-3](#) to remove the controversial banner from the grounds of its State House. For some Americans, the flag is said to serve as a symbol of Southern pride; for others it's an unwelcome reminder of this country's bloody legacy of slavery, racism, and white supremacy.

Now, sparked by the recent dialogue, some are [reigniting the debate](#) around yet another longstanding and controversial symbol: the seal of Whitesboro, New York.

A small village near the Mohawk River in Oneida County, Whitesboro, along with the larger municipality of Whitestown, was founded in the late 1700s by settler Hugh White. According to the [village's website](#), the seal depicts White grappling with a Native American during a “friendly wrestling match.” But the way the image is framed — with White's hands close to his opponent's neck, the Native American being forced toward the ground in apparent submission — has some calling the emblem offensive and racist.

Twitter was flooded late last month with images of the seal, at times accompanied by hashtags like #TakeItDown, #ChangeTheSeal, and #NotTheOnion. A petition to replace the emblem — which appears on Whitesboro vehicles, highway equipment, documents, and letterhead — has been posted on [Change.org](https://www.change.org). The petition currently has 250 supporters.

“The first thought that anyone has of this image is, ‘There’s some white guy killing an Indian, strangling an Indian,?’” Cliff Matias, director of the Redhawk Native American Arts Council in Brooklyn, tells the *Voice*. “It’s saying, ‘Well, they didn’t just conquer and defeat the people, but they also beat them in a wrestling match.’ It’s utterly ridiculous that a town would have pride in a symbol like that in this day and age.”

Whitesboro was sued over the seal by a Native American group in the 1970s, according to a [2009 article in the *Utica Observer-Dispatch*](#).

As a result, the village changed the image so that its founder’s hands were on the Native American’s shoulders — rather than up by his neck — but ultimately kept the seal intact. Joseph Malecki, a former mayor of Whitesboro, also once suggested changing the emblem, though the plan never came to fruition.

But despite the criticism, Whitesboro village officials maintain that the wrestling match was an important event in the village’s history and helped build relations between White and the area’s Native American population.

“I am aware that people are upset about it,” says Whitesboro mayor Patrick O’Connor. “Some have reached out directly to me through my village email. And if they looked at the seal and went with an opinion based solely on what they’re looking at, I could understand why people would have concern about it. But, [as with] everything else, I think you have to take all the facts into consideration. And if people take the time to do that and they reach out to us, or they do the research themselves, it’s actually a very accurate depiction of friendly wrestling matches that took place back in those days.”

O’Connor says he has not consulted with Native American organizations on the seal since taking office in April of 2014, but cites the *Observer-Dispatch* article, in which a representative of the Oneida Nation Council Turtle Clan argued that the image was not offensive.

The village’s website — which at times refers to Native Americans as “Indians,” and once as White’s “red neighbors” — does indeed paint the wrestling match as an act of heroism and valor on the part of its founder, with White accepting a challenge from an Oneida chief in order to gain respect and strengthen ties.

“He accepted the challenge, took hold of the Indian and by a fortunate trip, succeeded almost instantly in throwing him. As he saw him falling, in order to prevent another

challenge, he fell upon the Indian for an instant and it was some moments before he could rise,” the site reads. “When the Indian finally rose, he shrugged his shoulders and was said to have muttered ‘UGH, you good fellow too much.’ Hugh White became a hero in the eyes of the Oneida Indians.”

But even if one is to take the story at face value — believing that there was a friendly wrestling match won by White that earned him respect among the area’s native people — some still point to a power dynamic that appears to favor colonialism in both the presented narrative and the image on the seal.

“I think that in America there’s a certain nostalgic sort of idea that’s been created about Native Americans, particularly in places where there aren’t large populations or communities,” Matias says. “This has become this absolutely ridiculous idea that by using a Native American it’s talking about strength and honor.”

Still, in recent years it seems that the nation has gradually become more sensitive to such issues. There has been a growing movement to do away with the name of the Washington Redskins, a term largely considered to be a racial epithet against Native Americans. Last week, news broke that the Obama administration would [likely block the NFL team’s move into the actual District](#) if the name was not altered.

Social media has often been a driving force in these conversations, with the use of hashtags like #ChangeTheName and Facebook groups like [Eradicating Offensive Native Mascotry](#) serving as an outlet for debate.

“These kinds of discussions about visual imagery in the popular realm are very, very different today,” says Mario Caro, the associate director of the American Indian Program at Cornell University. “Now you have the internet giving voice. While the voice of the native here was very much regulated by and condoned by the Village of Whitesboro, the way in which this image and narratives about it are contextualized within social media is totally different. It’s native folks who are then able to respond and recontextualize that image.”

But even with all the cries of racism and insensitivity, Whitesboro seems unlikely to change the seal any time soon.

“It’s equally as big a deal to the people that have called Whitesboro home over the course of the last 200 years,” O’Connor says. “I would argue that you will find supporters to change the seal and you will find supporters to keep the seal. It absolutely is not meant as a sign of disrespect, and, as you look at the seal in totality, with the story that the seal represents, I don’t believe that it’s offensive.”

Still, regardless of what the history behind the image may be — and despite all the explaining it takes — the context and perception of the Whitesboro seal remains bitterly offensive to some.

“Let’s take off all the whitewash and get down to the nitty-gritty of this thing,” Matias says. “We know, they know, and everyone else knows that this symbol is absolutely preposterous. It’s racist in every sense of its form, and the use of it is ridiculous. ”

Direct Link: <http://www.villagevoice.com/news/mayor-of-whitesboro-ny-insists-this-village-seal-is-not-racist-7341880>

Ecuador indigenous groups complain of being left off pope's agenda

By [FRANK BAJAK](#) Associated Press

July 7, 2015 — 1:50pm

QUITO, Ecuador — Ecuador's largest indigenous association is complaining that it was left off of Pope Francis's agenda during his visit to Ecuador, where the group has been at odds with President Rafael Correa.

The head of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities, Jorge Herrera, said Roman Catholic Church officials never responded clearly to the group's request to meet directly with Francis during his three days in the country.

"It seems we're not being permitted a direct voice," he said late Monday.

The pope has made outreach to indigenous people a persistent theme during his three-nation South American tour. He has said indigenous peoples are the most vital stewards of the environment and the group most hurt by the ravages of deforestation and contamination by petroleum and mining industries.

The confederation, known by its Spanish initials as CONAIE, believes that for that reason, Francis should grant it privileged status during his three days in Ecuador.

The pope had no events in the country specifically aimed at indigenous people, though a lector at Tuesday's papal Mass in Quito delivered a reading in its dominant native tongue, Quichua.

In addition, 20 indigenous delegates were invited to a Tuesday night meeting with the pope that includes an array of "civil society" organizations, from business to sports to cultural figures.

CONAIE has clashed with nearly every Ecuadorean government since it was founded in 1986, and its street mobilizations helped topple a president in 2000. It has been battling Correa's effort to expand mining and oil drilling in the Amazon and several of its activists have been jailed for their roles in the protests.

Vatican planners generally try to avoid political provocations of a host government and usually are showered with requests for a meeting with the pontiff.

Ecuador's 18 indigenous groups — dominated by the Quichua to which Herrera belongs — account for at least a third of the country's 15 million people. However, only about 1 million identified themselves as such in the country's 2010 census.

Direct Link: <http://www.startribune.com/indigenous-leaders-complain-of-being-left-off-pope-s-agenda/312173111/>

Open Letter From Indigenous Women Scholars Regarding Discussions of Andrea Smith

[Various Authors](#)

7/7/15

We write to respond to widespread public discussion of well-known scholar-activist Andrea Smith's history of contradictory claims to Cherokee identity through both enrollment and lineal descent. While concerns about her claims have been known and discussed within various indigenous women's circles for years, many people are hearing details about them for the first time. The news has provoked a variety of responses from those committed to antiracist, antisexist, and anticolonial analyses and actions, including shock, incredulity, fear, anger, denial, and great sadness. Thus, differing and sometimes conflicting assumptions about the meanings and intentions of this discussion are circulating on social media. A prominent fear is that the discussion is motivated by a desire to undermine, police or ostracize an individual; another is that the work people find important in developing their understandings of colonization and sexual violence might now have to be jettisoned.

We hope to reframe this discussion and to collectively clarify what we believe to be core issues at stake. We are indigenous women scholars from a number of different indigenous nations, communities, academic disciplines, and geographies who are committed to working for gender, sexual, and racial justice in the context of decolonization. We write with the intention to open up discussion. We hope to elicit productive dialogues about deeply fraught and painful issues, and to suggest paths forward for continued and complex analysis of the roles identity plays in the work we do. We do not claim to represent all indigenous women in Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) or a monolithic indigenous feminism. There is diverse work within NAIS and Native/Indigenous gender, sexuality, and feminist studies, and also diverse perspectives within Native/Indigenous academic and activist communities about feminism. We respect that diversity. Additionally, we want to acknowledge the kinds of professional vulnerabilities that NAIS scholars are subject to, especially intergenerationally, through the politics of race, gender, and sexuality. Therefore, we did not invite untenured or adjunct faculty to sign this statement.

We call first and foremost for accountability to the communities in which we claim membership. This is not a call for the punitive or the exclusionary. This case evokes people's fears and vulnerabilities about very real histories of disenfranchisement, expulsion, discrimination, and normative policing in Indian Country and beyond. Thus it bears repeating: our concerns about Andrea Smith do not emerge from statist forms of enrollment or non-enrollment, federal recognition or lack thereof. They are not about blood quantum or other biologically essentialist notions of identity. Nor are they about cultural purity or authenticity, or imposing standards of identification that those who would work for or with indigenous communities must meet.

Rather, our concerns are about the profound need for transparency and responsibility in light of the traumatic histories of colonization, slavery, and genocide that shape the present. Andrea Smith has a decades-long history of self-contradictory stories of identity and affiliation testified to by numerous scholars and activists, including her admission to four separate parties that she has no claim to Cherokee ancestry at all. She purportedly promised to no longer identify as Cherokee, and yet in her subsequent appearances and publications she continues to assert herself as a non-specific “Native woman” or a “woman of color” scholar to antiracist activist communities in ways that we believe have destructive intellectual and political consequences. Presenting herself as generically indigenous, and allowing others to represent her as Cherokee, Andrea Smith allows herself to stand in as the representative of collectivities to which she has demonstrated no accountability, and undermines the integrity and vibrancy of Cherokee cultural and political survival. Her lack of clarity and consistency in her self-presentation adds to the vulnerability of the communities and constituents she purports to represent, including students and activists she mentors and who cite and engage her work. This concerns us as indigenous women committed to opening spaces for scholars and activists with whom we work and who come after us.

Asking for accountability to our communities and collectivities is not limited to Andrea Smith. Asking for transparency, self-reflexivity, and honesty about our complex histories and scholarly investments is motivated by the desire to strengthen ethical indigenous scholarship by both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars. This is one of the core guiding values of indigenous feminisms, and we believe that the long history of indigenous feminisms cannot and should not be reduced to Smith’s work as representative or originary, even as we recognize that her work on sexual violence and colonialism has had a profound impact on a wide range of constituencies.

Though some express fear that the power of indigenous feminist critique might be undermined by raising these concerns, such fear is a reflection of the urgent need for scholars in and beyond indigenous studies to extend their reading and citational practices to include the length and breadth of indigenous women’s writings and activism over the years. Indigenous women have always been at the forefront of their communities in naming and combatting colonization, genocide, and gendered violence. Looking at the US and Canada alone, work by Paula Gunn Allen, Kim Anderson, Beth Brant, Chrystos, Sarah Deer, Ella Deloria, Jennifer Denetdale, Mishuana Goeman, Joy Harjo, Sarah Hunt, E. Pauline Johnson, Winona LaDuke, Emma LaRoque, Lee Maracle, Bea Medicine, Dian Millon, Deborah Miranda, Dory Nason, Melissa K. Nelson, Jessica Bissett-Perea, Kimberly Robertson, Luana Ross, Priscilla Settee, Audra Simpson, Leanne Simpson, Lina Sunseri, Elle-Maija Tailfeathers, and Melanie Yazzie to name only some, demonstrates the vitality and richness of indigenous women’s voices that speak against the racial, gendered, and sexualized violences of colonialism.

Given the intellectual and emotional labor that Andrea Smith’s silence and lack of accountability has required us all—supporter or critic—to undertake, we would like to also ask for reflection and care in the stories generated to make sense of her contradictions and her silences. The history of Cherokee removal and dispossession is deeply woven into the same southeastern landscapes shaped by slavery and anti-black racism, and the Cherokee Nation’s disenfranchisement of the Freedmen must continue to

be ethically addressed and challenged. So too must efforts to expunge the rolls of entire families in indigenous nations across this continent. At the same time, we recognize that histories of “playing Indian” have gone hand in hand with dispossession of land in Indian Territory during allotment. Playing Indian is enabled by and supports the dominant narrative that indigenous peoples are vanishing or already vanished. The material consequences of that narrative includes ongoing claims by the state, by science, and by non-indigenous individuals to indigenous lands, sacred sites, remains, and both individual and group representations of us. Our concerns are grounded in these histories, and we challenge both individual and structural forms of indigenous erasure.

Smith’s self-acknowledged false claims and lack of clarity on her own identity perpetuate deeply ingrained notions of race—black, white, and Indian—that run counter to indigenous modes of kinship, family, and community connection. When she and others continue to produce her as Cherokee, indigenous, and/or as a woman of color by default, they reinforce a history in which settlers have sought to appropriate every aspect of indigenous life and absolve themselves of their own complicity with continued dispossession of both indigenous territory and existence.

The stories we tell have consequences, and the harm that some stories produce goes beyond their individual context. One of the devastating consequences of Smith having served as the often singular representative of indigeneity in a variety of academic and activist social justice contexts is damage to strategic alliance building, especially between indigenous and non-indigenous women of color. Accountability to communities, kinship networks and multiple histories is part of the difficult work scholars of indigenous and critical race studies must be willing to undertake to ensure that our work combats rather than reinforces or leaves untouched the intricate dynamics of heteropatriarchal racist colonialism.

Our desire here is to help move forward productive conversations surrounding the specific case of Andrea Smith and to also contextualize them within larger discussions long held in NAIS, a crucial field of inquiry. We hope that this current moment can provide scholars and activists involved with NAIS, critical ethnic studies, gender, sexuality and queer studies, and multiple activist communities an opportunity to expand their methodologies, citational practices, pedagogies, curriculum, advising/mentoring, and political organizing. We hope to foster collaboration across our fields and communities that builds our solidarity with LGBTQ, women of color, and all progressive anti-racist and decolonial scholars and activists, and that contributes to our ethical, integral, and accountable relations with one another. We do not ask anyone to step back from dialogue and disagreement, only that all proceed thoughtfully, with awareness of the often conflictual histories of dispossession, oppression and loss that underpin these conversations.

Respectfully,

Joanne Barker (Lenape [Delaware Tribe of Indians]), Professor of American Indian Studies, San Francisco State University

Jodi A. Byrd (Citizen of the Chickasaw Nation), Associate Professor of American Indian Studies, English, and Gender and Women’s Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Jill Doerfler (White Earth Ojibwe), Associate Professor, American Indian Studies
University of Minnesota-Duluth

Lisa Kahaleole Hall (Kanaka Maoli), Associate Professor of Women's and Gender
Studies, Wells College

LeAnne Howe (Enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), Eidson
Distinguished Professor in American Literature, University of Georgia, Athens

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (Kanaka Maoli), Associate Professor of American Studies and
Anthropology, Wesleyan University

Jean O'Brien (White Earth Ojibwe), Distinguished McKnight University Professor,
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Kathryn W. Shanley (Nakoda), Professor of Native American Studies, University of
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Shannon Speed (Citizen of the Chickasaw Nation), Associate Professor of Anthropology
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University of Texas, Austin

Jacki Thompson Rand (Citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), Associate
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*We note tribal and institutional affiliations for informational purposes only. The opinions
expressed herein do not represent those of our tribes, institutions, or departments.*

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/07/open-letter-indigenous-women-scholars-regarding-discussions-andrea-smith>

Federal judge orders cancellation of Redskins' trademark registrations



More and more people are saying the NFL franchise for Washington should change its name. Here are a few of them.

By [Ian Shapira](#) July 8 at 3:31 PM

The Washington Redskins lost their biggest legal and public relations battle yet in the war over their name after a federal judge on Wednesday ordered the cancellation of the NFL team's federal trademark registrations, opposed for decades by Native American activists who call the moniker disparaging.

The cancellation, hailed by Native American activists as a "huge victory," doesn't go into effect until the team has exhausted the appeals process in the federal court system. And Redskins President Bruce Allen vowed Wednesday that the team would appeal.

"We are convinced that we will win on appeal as the facts and the law are on the side of our franchise that has proudly used the name Washington Redskins for more than 80 years," Allen said in a statement.

But even if the Redskins ultimately take the case to the Supreme Court and lose, the team can still use "Redskins" and seek trademark protections under state law. The team has argued, however, that a cancellation of its trademarks could taint its brand and remove legal benefits that would protect it against copycat entrepreneurs.

U.S. District [Judge Gerald Bruce Lee's decision](#) affirmed an earlier ruling by the federal Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. Last year, the appeal board declared in a 2-1 vote that the team's moniker is offensive to Native Americans and therefore ineligible for federal trademark protection under the Lanham Act.

Lee agreed with that assessment, rejecting the team's argument that the vast majority of Native Americans had no objection to the name when the trademarks were granted between 1967 and 1990. Instead the judge questioned why the team ever chose the name, pointing out in his ruling that Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defined the word as "often contemptuous" in 1898, "*seventy years* prior to the registration of the first Redskins Mark."

But Lee also emphasized that his decision does not stop the team from using its name or fans from buying the team's gear emblazoned with the word Redskins.

The trademark case against the Redskins has been pursued by five Native American activists, including Amanda Blackhorse, a Navajo who is well known for leading protests against the team outside stadiums wherever it plays.

After the trademark appeal board's ruling against the team, the Redskins tried to overturn the decision by suing Blackhorse and the four other Native American activists in federal court in Alexandria, Va. The team argued that the Lanham Act conflicts with their First Amendment rights. It also contended that Blackhorse didn't prove that enough Native Americans opposed the name at the time the team registered its trademarks in 1967, 1974, 1978 and 1990.

In his statement, Allen said he was "surprised" with Lee's decision to grant the Native Americans summary judgment in the case and cancel a full-blown trial. "We look forward to winning" at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit in Richmond, he said.

Jesse Witten, one of the attorneys for the Native Americans, celebrated the judge's ruling. "This is a huge victory. Getting this ruling from a U.S. District judge is a watershed event," Witten said, although he acknowledged that the fight will go on.

Federal trademark law does not permit registration of trademarks that "may disparage" individuals or groups. Here's a look at the Redskins' logo and team imagery throughout the years. (Tom LeGro and Natalie Jennings/The Washington Post)

Blackhorse, who lives in Arizona on the Navajo reservation, said the ruling has a far-reaching impact on how people see Native Americans and think about the team's name.

"This case is about humanizing the indigenous identity," she said. "I have asked this many times before and have never heard a sensible answer — if people wouldn't dare call a Native American a 'redskin' because they know it is offensive, how can an NFL football team have this name?"

The Redskins have been waging a legal war to defend their federal trademark registrations for more than two decades. The fight began in 1992, when a group of Native Americans led by Suzan Shown Harjo filed a petition with the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board to strip the team's name of its registrations. Seven years later, the panel ruled in Harjo's favor.

But the Redskins appealed in federal court, winning on the grounds that Harjo and the other Native Americans didn't produce enough evidence showing the name was insulting and that they waited too long after turning 18 years old — legally adults — to claim the name is offensive.

Before that case was lost, Blackhorse and four other young Native Americans from Florida, Utah and Oklahoma had filed their own petition with the trademark appeal board in August 2006.

Last year, the appeal board ruled in Blackhorse's favor, voting to cancel the Redskins' trademark registrations in a decision that reinvigorated the movement against the name. There have been rallies at Redskins games across the country led by Blackhorse. And members of Congress proposed legislation to strip the NFL of its nonprofit status if the league continued using the name. (The league announced in April it was stripping itself of its tax-exempt structure.)

In its ruling, the appeal board asserted that "Redskins" offends a large number of Native Americans and is therefore ineligible for trademark registration under the federal Lanham Act, which bars protection for names that "may disparage" or bring people into contempt or disrepute. The board based its vote on several factors, including that "Redskins" is a dictionary-defined slur and the National Congress of American Indians declared the name racist.

The team, in the lawsuit it filed against the Native American activists in August, argued that U.S. patent officials had infringed on the Redskins' free speech rights and taken away a valuable commodity "without just compensation" because the organization has invested millions of dollars in the use, promotion and protection of its trademarks. (The Redskins' lawyers said in court papers that the team's value increased from \$741 million in 2000 to \$2.4 billion by August 2014, with its brand management valued at \$214 million.)

But Lee said the appeal board's decision and the Lanham Act do not violate the First Amendment. He cited a fresh Supreme Court ruling in June that declared Texas didn't violate the First Amendment when it banned specialty license plates proposed by the Sons of Confederate Veterans bearing the Confederate flag.

The Supreme Court held that states don't have to issue speciality license plates whose messages they don't want to endorse but that would nonetheless carry the government's imprimatur. The Native Americans' attorneys argued that the same theory holds true in this case: The trademark office doesn't have to hand out registrations to entities whose names it finds offensive but that would still carry the federal government's stamp of approval. The government, the judge wrote, is exempt from First Amendment scrutiny.

The team also claimed that Blackhorse and her fellow defendants didn't meet the legal burden of proof by showing that enough Native Americans viewed the Redskins trademarks as offensive at the time each registration was issued. But the judge countered, pointing to "highly probative" testimony from the Redskins' own linguistics expert, who conceded that the team name "certainly might be offensive" from 1967 onward.

Throughout the entire battle, the Redskins have argued that the team name honors Native Americans. Dan Snyder, the owner, has vowed that he will never change the name.

Direct Link: http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/judge-upholds-cancellation-of-redskins-trademarks-in-a-legal-and-symbolic-setback-for-team/2015/07/08/5a65424e-1e6e-11e5-aeb9-a411a84c9d55_story.html

First lady addresses inaugural Native American youth summit

By *DARLENE SUPERVILLE and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN* 3 hours ago



WASHINGTON (AP) — Michelle Obama on Thursday told hundreds of Native American youths that they are all precious and sacred and that "each of you was put on this earth for a reason."

"Each of you has something that you're destined to do, whether that's raising a beautiful family, whether that's succeeding in a profession or leading your community into a better future," the first lady said in a sometimes emotional address at a first-time summit called by the White House. "You all have a role to play and we need you."

The event was part of Generation Indigenous, or Gen-I, a White House initiative that grew from President Barack Obama and Mrs. Obama's visit last year to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which straddles the border between North Dakota and South Dakota. Meetings followed, Cabinet members held listening tours, tribal youth were chosen as ambassadors and a national network was formed.

The goal is to remove barriers that keep young people from reaching their potential.

Teenagers at the summit represented 230 tribes and 42 states. Discussions focused on economic opportunity, education and cultural and other issues.

From New Mexico's pueblos to Midwest reservations, nearly one-third of American Indian youths live in poverty, according to federal statistics. They have the highest

suicide rates of any ethnicity in the U.S., as well as the lowest high school graduation rates.



First lady Michelle Obama speaks to Native American youth at the first White House Tribal Youth Gath ...

Mrs. Obama recalled hearing "heart-wrenching stories" of substance abuse and other crises during last year's visit but said the storytellers were looking to the future, not giving up.

She urged the young people to "draw strength" from knowing that their customs, values and discoveries are "at the heart of the American story" and have shaped U.S. history for centuries.

"Everyone in this room has your back," she said. "Everyone who is speaking at this summit, all those Cabinet secretaries, all those powerful people who have come here for you, they have your back," Mrs. Obama said. "And you definitely have a president and first lady who have your back."

She also counseled the young people to connect with and "be inspired by each other," and to find out what issues others are working on and to take ideas home with them.

"Run for office. Local office, state office, even president of the United States," Mrs. Obama said. "I know you all have it in you."



In this photo taken on May 1, 2015, 16-year-old Miguel Wambli stands at the Pine Ridge Indian Reserv ...

Participants came up with ideas to address problems in their communities. Miguel Wambli, 16, of Rapid City, South Dakota, and a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, created a newspaper to feature writing by Native American students.

Seven suicides by teenagers in recent months have shaken the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and close to 1,000 suicide attempts were recorded on the reservation over nearly 10 years. Some students have projects aimed at raising awareness, while Wambli believes a newspaper would give teenagers an outlet.

"I want to try just to help them find their voice and be able to express themselves and be knowledgeable about what's going on in their community," he said.

Montoya Bryan in Albuquerque, New Mexico, contributed to this report.

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/native-american-youth-gather-dc-inaugural-summit-104026902.html>

Redskins ruling could pave way for overreach in federal trademark office

By [Andrea Noble](#) - The Washington Times - Wednesday, July 8, 2015

A federal court ruling ordering the cancellation of the Washington Redskins' trademarks could pave the way for government overreach in the federal trademark office but is unlikely to lead to any immediate problems for other sports teams under scrutiny for use of American Indian imagery or names, according to analysts monitoring the case.

U.S. District Judge Gerald Bruce Lee ruled Wednesday in favor of five American Indians who argued that the Redskins trademark is derogatory and ordered the cancellation of the team's federal trademark registrations. The judge found that the six trademarks at issue "consisted of matter that 'may disparage' a substantial composite of Native Americans."

Redskins president Bruce Allen said the team was surprised by the ruling and would appeal the case.

"We are convinced that we will win because the facts and the law are on the side of our franchise that has proudly used the name Redskins for more than 80 years," Mr. Allen said.

The ruling could lay a path for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to be more selective about awarding trademarks, said Rebecca Glenberg, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union in Virginia.

"The ruling says that a trademark holder's First Amendment rights are not implicated at all by the government's decision to register or not register the trademark," Ms. Glenberg

said. "If that's true, then there is nothing to prevent the government from playing favorites when it decides which companies and organizations get federal trademark registration."

The ACLU sided with the Redskins in the case, arguing in a friend-of-the-court brief that a cancellation of the trademark would be a violation of the First Amendment — a claim the judge rejected on the basis that the federal trademark program represents government speech rather than private speech.

However, the ACLU remains opposed to the use of the team name, calling it "at least problematic, if not outright racist."

"This ruling really is much broader than just the Washington football team's terrible name," Ms. Glenberg said.

Several sports teams using American Indian imagery and names — including Major League Baseball's Cleveland Indians, with its Chief Wahoo mascot, and the Atlanta Braves, with its tomahawk chop — have come under attack in recent years as well.

Although the U.S. District Court ruling on the Redskins trademarks should be a source of concern for other teams with American Indian imagery, it won't start a domino effect of trademark cancellations, said Michael McCann, director of the Sports and Entertainment Law Institute at the University of New Hampshire School of Law.

"That's a significant holding," Mr. McCann said. "But the truth is, those other teams that have associations with Native Americans, each name has to be treated differently. Evidence would have to show that each of those names and images is offensive."

To score the same sort of victory, those in opposition to the names would have to prove that the names or logos of other sports teams were offensive at the time they were trademarked, said Mitchell Stabbe, a Washington-based trademark lawyer.

In the case of the Redskins, Judge Lee considered the use of the word spanning back to 1967 with evidence including scholarly articles, newspaper clips and statements made by American Indians.

"None of those cases are as strong as the argument about the word 'redskins,'" Mr. Stabbe said of other sports teams.

A spokesman for the Cleveland Indians said the team had no comment on the ruling. A spokeswoman for the Atlanta Braves did not return a call for comment.

Private vs. government speech

Although Judge Lee's ruling stipulates that the Redskins trademarks will not be canceled until the team has exhausted all of its options in the federal appeals process, the decision

in no way forces the team to stop using the name. Instead, it will create hurdles for the team to protect its brand.

One such benefit of federal registration would allow the team to record its trademark with U.S. Customs and Border Protection so that officers could be on the lookout for imports of black market merchandise, Mr. Stabbe said.

Judge Lee's ruling upheld a decision last year by the U.S. Patent Office's Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, which called the trademarks disparaging and ordered a cancellation of the registrations.

The Redskins sought to overturn the ruling by filing a lawsuit in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, against the five American Indian activists who pursued the trademark cancellation. The team argued that a cancellation of the trademarks would violate its First Amendment rights to free speech.

"The federal trademark program is government speech and is therefore exempt from First Amendment scrutiny," the judge said in his 70-page opinion.

Calls for the Redskins to change the name have grown louder in recent years, with local and federal officials weighing in.

The District's nonvoting representative to Congress, Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, said she hopes the loss in federal court would compel team owner Dan Snyder to get "on with his real business of getting the team back in winning form and selecting a new mascot."

"The national public outcry has been overwhelming, and it is clear residents do not want their beloved Washington football team name to be aligned with the disparagement of Native Americans or any other ethnic group," Ms. Norton said.

D.C. officials have tried to lure the team back to the city with proposals to demolish the RFK Stadium and rebuild a new stadium in its place, where the Redskins played before leaving for FedEx Field in Prince George's County, Maryland.

However the National Park Service this month said it won't grant a lease of the land for the stadium because Interior Secretary Sally Jewell opposes the team's name.

Despite the political and legal pressure to change the name, Mr. Snyder has vowed never to acquiesce.

"There isn't going to be a court decision that requires the team to drop the name," Mr. McCann said. "The Redskins will keep the team name as long as they want. The only mechanism that would force them to change it would be pressure by the NFL and the commissioner."

Direct Link: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jul/8/redskins-trademark-ruling-unlikely-to-apply-to-oth/print/>

Court revises test on determining Native American status

Originally published July 8, 2015 at 3:37 pm Updated July 9, 2015 at 10:50 am

By [FELICIA FONSECA](#)

The Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Attorneys in federal cases stemming from crimes on American Indian reservations have new guidance on what's needed to prove a defendant is Indian.

Federal authorities have jurisdiction over major crimes on tribal land when the victim, suspect or both are American Indian. A two-part test determines who is Indian.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals revised the first part of that test in an opinion Tuesday — no longer requiring that the degree of Indian blood be traced to a federally recognized tribe — and restored an Arizona man's 90-year sentence on assault and firearms charges.

The court said evidence at trial was enough to find Damien Zepeda is American Indian. Zepeda, an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Community, disagreed.

"That's why it was so important to clarify that the proof in this case was sufficient," said Arthur Hellman, a University of Pittsburgh law professor who monitors the 9th Circuit. "This will lay down the rule for future prosecutors."

In 2013, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit ruled prosecutors did not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Zepeda's bloodline of one-quarter Pima and one-quarter Tohono O'odham derived from an American Indian tribe recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. It reversed all but one of nine convictions and ordered a lower court to resentence him.

The panel also said federal recognition of a tribe is a matter for a jury to decide.

The court revised its opinion in September 2013 and said federal recognition is a question of law to be decided by a judge. The full 9th Circuit agreed Tuesday.

The new opinion reinstates Zepeda's convictions and sentence, and modifies what's known as the Bruce test for determining who is American Indian.

Under the revised test, a defendant still must be a member of or affiliated with a federally recognized tribe, and have a degree of Indian blood. But the defendant's blood quantum no longer must be traced to a federally recognized tribe.

The full 9th Circuit said the test was satisfied with Zepeda's tribal enrollment certificate, testimony by Zepeda's brother that their father was an Indian, and the Gila River Indian Community being a federally recognized tribe.

Zepeda's attorney, Michele Moretti, said Wednesday she would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Federal prosecutors declined to comment.

The 9th Circuit had placed several other cases dealing with Indian status on hold until it addressed the question in Zepeda's case.

The court was unanimous its ruling, but Judges Alex Kozinski and Sandra Ikuta disagreed with the reasoning. They said the Bruce test as refined by the majority violates equal protection rights because it turns on race, not political affiliation.

Kozinski said the U.S. Supreme Court has stressed that federal regulation of tribes does not equate to federal regulation of the Indian race.

"Damien Zepeda will go to prison for over 90 years because he has 'Indian blood,' while an identically situated tribe member with different racial characteristics would have had his indictment dismissed," Kozinski wrote.

Rob Williams, a University of Arizona law professor, said the cases raises interesting questions about identity, who asserts that identity and what makes someone Indian.

Standards vary among federal agencies that administer benefits to tribes and in the court system about what defines Indians, he said. Some tribes use blood quantum to determine membership, while others require ancestry to be traced to the original rolls.

"This is what is unique about federal Indian law as opposed to other countries," he said. "There is no uniform definition of who an Indian is."

Direct Link: <http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/court-revises-test-on-determining-native-american-status/>

Native American artist brings 900 horses back to life in Spokane

Horses slaughtered by U.S. Army in 1858 to break spirit of Washington territory tribes now commemorated in mural

July 9, 2015 5:00AM ET

by [Kevin Taylor](#)



College friends April Kirby, left, and Johnna Avis were driving from Connecticut to Seattle in June when they made a stop in Spokane, Washington, and encountered the “900 Horses” mural. They each decorated a horse in commemoration of the slaughter of tribal horses by the U.S. Army in 1858. Kevin Taylor

SPOKANE, Wash. — In 1858, when Col. George Wright ordered U.S. Army soldiers to massacre 900 horses they took from the Native American tribes of Washington Territory, the grisly job took only two days.

“This work of slaughter has been going on since 10 o’clock a.m. yesterday and will not be completed before this evening,” he wrote in a report to the secretary of war about his [punitive campaign](#) to defeat the combined forces of several Plateau Culture tribes.

“A blow has been struck which they will never forget,” he continued.

On that count, Wright was correct. But how the horses were remembered 157 years later might have surprised him.

It took artist [Ryan Feddersen](#), an enrolled member of the [Colville Confederated Tribes](#), nine days under a relentless sun — temperatures in Spokane last month were 20 to 30 degrees above normal — to move inch by inch on a sizzling concrete plaza, using blue and green chalk to color a background for a mural that would become known as “900 Horses,” filling the downtown plaza with a flowing river of brightly colored ponies painted by hundreds of hands.

Feddersen, who grew up off the reservation and now lives in Seattle, did not hear of Wright’s horse slaughter until she was brainstorming for a theme for the public art piece, sponsored by Spokane Arts, with her historian husband, Brock Johnson.

The facts are grim. Wright torched storehouses full of food set aside by the tribes for the coming winter, had 16 surrendering Native warriors summarily hanged and then had the captured 700 to 1,000 horses (estimates vary) shot to death. A pioneer group erected [a monument](#) at what became known as Horse Slaughter Camp in 1946. Feddersen wanted something different to mark the events.

“Monuments are symbols of power. They celebrate and reinforce the primacy of a political or historical viewpoint,” she said.

By making a memorial, “we create a focus for our remembrance to honor the deceased. This event is so important to remember, not just to recognize the history of place but as a lens through which to view violence and warfare.”

Bloody history

“Nothing can more effectually cripple the Indians than to deprive them of their animals,” wrote Lt. Lawrence Kip in a journal written during Wright’s campaign and published in 1859.

The enigmatic Kip left a rare firsthand account in “Army Life on the Pacific: A Journal of the Expedition Against the Northern Indians.” He wrote that after Wright met with officers the morning of Sept. 9 and decided to kill the captured horses, two companies of soldiers were ordered to hastily build a corral along the Spokane River, near what is now the Washington-Idaho border, and drive the horses in. Then, he wrote:

One by one they were lassoed and dragged out and dispatched by a single shot ... The colts were led out and knocked in the head. It was distressing all during the following night, to hear the cries of the brood mares whose young had thus been taken from them. On the following day, to avoid the slow process of killing them separately, the companies were ordered to fire volleys into the corral.

Capt. Erasmus D. Keyes, another of Wright’s officers, said, “Towards the last, the soldiers appeared to exult in their bloody task, and such is the ferocious character of men.”

Several accounts say the mass of bones was visible until at least 1911.

“I wanted to draw attention to the incident but in a way that was more of a recognition of the loss and an acknowledgment of the scale and how it must have felt,” Feddersen said.

The slaughter, she said, “is a way for people to look at the Indian Wars in a different light.”

Color and remembrance

As the plaza filled with color, Ellen Welcker, who recently moved to Spokane, said, “It’s really overwhelming, almost dizzying, to look at the horses, because they are so colorful and there are so many of them. Seeing that and then thinking about what it would be like to be in the midst of 900 to 1,000 real horses — murdering those horses — was very moving.”

“It was painful,” said LaRae Wiley, a Native woman who learned of the horse slaughter as an adult.

Feddersen said one of her favorite moments came early one morning when Wiley, a co-founder of the immersion elementary Salish School of Spokane took its students to see the project.

They formed a line at the head of the mural and, with hand drums that they’d made themselves, sang a blessing song in Salish for the horses.

Mireya Parkin-Pineda, 8, a second-grader at the Salish School, chose white, black and pink paints for her horse. “I painted it pink with black curlicues, a black mane and white stripes and a black tail with white curlicues.”

But she was most impressed, she said, “that everybody got to honor the horses.”

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/7/9/native-american-artist-brings-900-horses-back-to-life-in-spokane.html>

1,000-year-old corn cobs and kernels uncovered at Native American site



An ear of corn is displayed. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke, file)

The Associated Press

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MITCHELL, S.D. -- Archaeologists in the northwestern state of South Dakota have uncovered corn cobs, corn kernels and sunflower kernels that are more than 1,000 years old.

The discoveries at the Prehistoric Indian Village in Mitchell show that people who lived in the region at the time farmed and had a diverse diet, according to officials.

The village is an active archaeological site open to the public. Students from the University of Exeter in England and Augustana College in Sioux Falls work every year at the site, which holds dual status as a National Register and National Historic Landmark site. The team has found as much carbonized plant matter in the last two weeks than it had in the past 11 years, said Alan Outram, who's in his 12th year of bringing students from London to Mitchell.

"Of course, it's important to this area," he said. "The thing is, this is an agricultural area and this is the history of that agriculture."

Archaeologists got an idea of where the best deposits at the site would be when the Thomsen Center Archeodome was being built, said Augustana archaeology professor Adrien Hannus.

"This village isn't the origin of prehistoric agriculture, but it is one of the key sites in understanding what was done here," Hannus said.

The new discoveries indicate the village dwellers weren't exactly primitive, Hannus told [The Daily Republic](#). It was a successful village of farmers, hunters and foragers, he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/1-000-year-old-corn-cobs-and-kernels-uncovered-at-native-american-site-1.2461098>

Institutionalizing the Native American Self-Determination Movement

[LaDonna Harris](#)

7/8/15

Collaborating with my daughters on my memoirs I've had the opportunity to reflect on the past 45 years of the American Indian Self Determination Movement and the unique modern history that I am privileged to have been a part of. Forty-five years ago, I and a cohort of national Native American activists founded Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO), and July 8 marks the 45th anniversary of President Nixon's Special Message to Congress on Indian Affairs. On this anniversary, I hope all Americans pause to reflect or learn more about this seminal statement and the changes in federal Indian policy. Seen as the formal beginning of our Self Determination Movement, Nixon's message repudiated the current policy of terminating the federal recognition of Indian tribes and the devastating consequences of other detrimental policies. An understanding of this

important era may help guide policy now, laying the groundwork for the next 45 years of federal-tribal relations. As I look back and as we prepare for the future, I clearly understand that we must do our best to institutionalize or make permanent positive change and the instruments that helped to create that change.

I began my national work to improve the well-being of Indigenous Peoples a few years before the Nixon Administration with an appointment by President Lyndon B. Johnson to the National Council on Indian Opportunity (NCIO). Johnson sent the first Executive Message to Congress on Indian Affairs in 1968 and Sargent Shriver enlisted my help in ensuring the inclusion of tribal governments and urban Indians in Johnson's War on Poverty.

Over several decades, the U.S. Congress had terminated more than 70 Indian tribes, and transferred jurisdiction over Native Americans and Indian lands to certain states via Public Law 280. Essentially, the legal and inherent right to be culturally and politically autonomous for the first peoples of the United States was being systematically terminated. In addition to termination, tribal people were suffering due to other federal policies of assimilation, including the Indian Relocation Program that moved thousands of Native Americans from rural reservations to urban areas. These failed policies resulted in lost tribal lands and resources, reduced and divided communities, and underserved and impoverished tribal citizens. By the 1960s, throughout Indian country and in every major city, Native Americans suffered the worst socio-economic indicators in the country.

Lyndon Johnson was my champion. Through his War on Poverty, many Native American leaders emerged and many new social programs benefited tribal communities, like Head Start and Job Corps. Johnson appointed the first Native American Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Bob Bennett (Oneida of Wisconsin). At Bennett's swearing in ceremony, I remember Johnson saying, "Bob, now, you go over to the Smithsonian. Get one of those Indian war clubs, and hit those departments up side the head so that they understand that Indians are citizens of the United States and are entitled to all the services the Federal Government has to offer."

In his 1968 Message to Congress, entitled "The Forgotten American," President Johnson outlined new initiatives and he recognized that "[n]o enlightened Nation, no responsible government; no progressive people can sit idly by and permit this shocking situation to continue." He proposed a new goal for federal Indian programs that ended the debate about termination, erased old attitudes of paternalism, and instead stressed self-determination. He also recognized that there was "too little coordination between agencies; and no clear, unified policy which applied to all." The War on Poverty actually ended the colonial stranglehold of the Department of Interior over Indian people and tribal governments.

To address these issues and launch a government-wide effort, Johnson established by Executive Order 11399 the National Council on Indian Opportunity. The NCIO was intended to review federal programs for Native Americans, make broad policy recommendations, and ensure that federal programs reflect the needs and desires of the Indian communities, including the encouragement of interagency coordination. The Opportunities Council was chaired by the Vice President of the United States, Hubert Humphrey and originally included six Department Secretaries, the Director of the President's Office of Economic Opportunity, Sargent Shriver, and six tribal leaders.

Americans, today, may not understand the importance of the NCIO which marked the first time that the federal government actively engaged Native peoples and tribal leaders in national decision-making. The Council provided a space for Native Americans to identify problems and create solutions within the federal system—in other words, to be self-determining. For the first time, tribal leaders and members of the President's Cabinet sat side by side developing federal policy to address the dire circumstances in Indian country. President Johnson's original appointees were Wendell Chino (Mescalero Apache), William Hensley (Inupiat), Roger Jourdain (Red Lake Band of Chippewa), Raymond Nakai (Navajo), Cato Valandra (Rosebud Sioux), and me. I was the only person who was not an elected tribal official and the only woman. I focused on the plight of urban Indians who I believed to be about 50 percent of the Native population. A recent study by the National Urban Indian Families Coalition reports that the real number is closer to 75 percent.

I am proud to have served with such a strong group of effective tribal leaders and to have worked directly with Vice President Humphrey. Together, and with the help of many Native American activists, the NCIO created a revolution in policy, modified perceptions and transformed the attitude of the nation. The NCIO brokered the establishment of Indian Desks in nearly every Federal Department and agency, yet few know of its existence.

With the election of Richard Nixon, Vice President Spiro Agnew took over as Chair of the National Council on Indian Opportunity. Nixon, who had had a Native American football coach, was empathetic to Indian issues. During the Nixon Administration, the work of the NCIO was supported by Bobbie Kilberg. Having previously worked in legal aid for the Navajo Nation and as a White House Fellow, Bobbie became instrumental in keeping the NCIO active and affective during the Nixon Administration. I nurtured a remarkable relationship with Ms. Kilberg, and in the Comanche tradition, I adopted Bobbie as a daughter. Together, we fought for the return of the sacred Blue Lake to the people of Taos Pueblo, but that's another story.

The NCIO with Bobbie's staffing played a key role in developing President Nixon's Special Message to Congress and the notable policies that followed. The Council presented a set of policy proposals which were assessed by Cabinet Members. The Cabinet's responses became the essence and substance of Nixon's Special Message of July 8, 1970. That Message to Congress set us on a clear path that led to enactment of much landmark legislation that defined and implemented federal self-determination policies.

Unfortunately, because it was never made permanent, the National Council on Indian Opportunity did not survive Agnew's political troubles and scandal. The NCIO was moved to the Bureau of Indian Affairs where it died in 1974 when Congressional funding authorization expired. President Gerald Ford's administration did not move to continue or renew the program.

The NCIO helped bring about the self-determination era and an American Indian movement that turned the tide of public opinion, ushering in a new dawn of tribal governance and economic development. In short, Native American activists and tribal leaders emerged from the termination era more determined to secure and preserve their cultures, and demand a seat at the table to advocate for our sovereignty.

Sadly, many of the problems Native Americans faced in the 1960s and 70s are still with us. Progress is stagnated by increased pressures on Native youth and tribal governments. For most Native Americans, the struggle for meaningful economic development and steady employment, quality education, decent housing, adequate healthcare, and sound infrastructure are all still a constant struggle. While President Barack Obama has appointed more Native Americans in his Administration than any other President (maybe all U.S. Presidents put together), tribal leaders are still often disrespected, urban Indians are mostly ignored and our right to be self-governing is under constant and organized attack.

Certainly, we've made great strides since 1970, both economically and in tribal-federal relations. In particular, President Obama holds an annual White House Tribal Nations Conference, and he established the White House Council on Native American Affairs. My concern is that the many appointments, the annual Conference and Council on Native American Affairs exist at the pleasure of this President. Americans for Indian Opportunity has long held that we must institutionalize tribal government and urban Indian participation within the government.

AIO developed a presentation called "Indian 101" because we found that most Americans, especially decision-makers, don't know much about the Indigenous Peoples of the U.S. AIO learned from the demise of NCIO how little top officials and key decision-makers understand that tribes are governments and the complexities of federal-tribal trust responsibility. From Main Street to the White House, Native Americans are often either invisible or perceived as a problem. Over my 50-something year career, I have had to educate officials about Indians and tribal governments before I could get them to move forward on a particular policy or piece of legislation because we do not have a permanent, visible role in national policy-making.

My good friend and colleague, the Honorable Rueben Snake (Winnebago), once said that to overcome the lack of understanding about Indigenous Peoples, every Indian ought to adopt four Anglos and make them family. I've done my part but the Crow Nation had the foresight to adopt Barack Obama which began his "Indian 101" lessons when he was still a presidential candidate.

This endless educational process lead AIO to advocate for institutionalizing tribal governments within the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. We achieved success when the Clinton Administration created the position of Tribal Liaison but we had to wait for President Obama to fill the position with the first Native.

Despite the good work of the NCIO, Indian Desks, Departmental Indian Policy Statements, tribal governments and urban Indian centers still have to cut through the inevitable "white-tape" of the federal bureaucracy, the lack of knowledge and the often conflicting or out dated policies.

I think in part because of his Crow adoption, President Obama has made significant progress in valuing tribal leaders and providing space at the national level to address Indian issues. The Obama Administration has moved us forward through the Native American appointees, with the annual Tribal Conference, the inclusion of an Indian representative on the Domestic Policy Council and hosting the first White House Urban Indian Roundtable Discussions. On the advice of tribal leaders and the advocacy of

organizations like the National Congress of American Indians, President Obama created the White House Council of Native American Affairs made up of members of his Cabinet and chaired by the Secretary of Interior to coordinate government-wide initiatives such as Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) to support Native youth programs. All of these efforts are vitally important to Indian country.

Worrisome however, is that with the election of a new President, regardless of political party, these steps forward can all be lost. Now is the time to undertake the important work of institutionalizing these advances.

It is critical to the well-being of Tribal America that we protect by legislation and permanent mandate that a strong Native American advocate always be the tribal liaison in the Intergovernmental Affairs Office to reinforce the oft forgotten or little-known fact that Indian tribes are governments. The Domestic Policy Council should always include an activist for the rights of urban Indians and indigenous immigrants. The forward movement we have achieved needs to be institutionalized through policy and law.

To assess how best to address these issues, I encourage us to look back to the start of the self-determination era, and learn from our valuable experience then. Reinforced in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Native Americans have to be a part of the supervision and formulation of national policies, and the organizations, institutions and programs making policy must have significant Native representation. We know that success depends on tribal leaders and Native activists being at the table before—not after—major decisions are made. At the same time, as in the temporary White House Council and the old NCIO on which I served, it is essential that a coordinating body for federal Indian policies include members of the President's Cabinet as well as tribal leaders and Native advocates. These measures must be made permanent so that appropriate, consistent federal commitments can be made and implemented. Without permanence, we will once again strain our precious resources to educate and bring up to speed a green Administration and a new Congress.

As we reflect on the important anniversary of President Nixon's Special Message to Congress, we must remember how we got to where we are and how we can best move forward from here. Many federal officials, Members of Congress, and tribal leaders contributed greatly over many years to all that we have achieved. We can be proud and appreciate those small groups in the right place at the right time who played pivotal roles in creating substantial and lasting positive change. I am gratified that the National Council on Indian Opportunity played a role 45 years ago, and I hope that we can find a way to harness that spirit and effort to help move us forward to the next great generation of advancement in federal Indian policies.

LaDonna Harris, an enrolled citizen of the Comanche Nation, is founder and president of [Americans for Indian Opportunity](#). As a national leader, Harris has influenced the agendas of the civil rights, feminist, environmental and world peace movements. She was a founding member of Common Cause and the National Urban Coalition and is an ardent spokesperson against poverty and social injustice. As an advocate for women's rights, she was an original convener of the National Women's Political Caucus. As the 1980 Vice Presidential nominee on the Citizens Party ticket with Barry Commoner, Harris firmly added environmental issues to that and future presidential campaigns. Her influence now reaches to the international community to promote peace as well. In past

years, Harris was the U.S. Representative on UNESCO and to the OAS Inter-American Indigenous Institute. Currently, Harris serves on the board of Think New Mexico, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/08/institutionalizing-native-american-self-determination-movement>